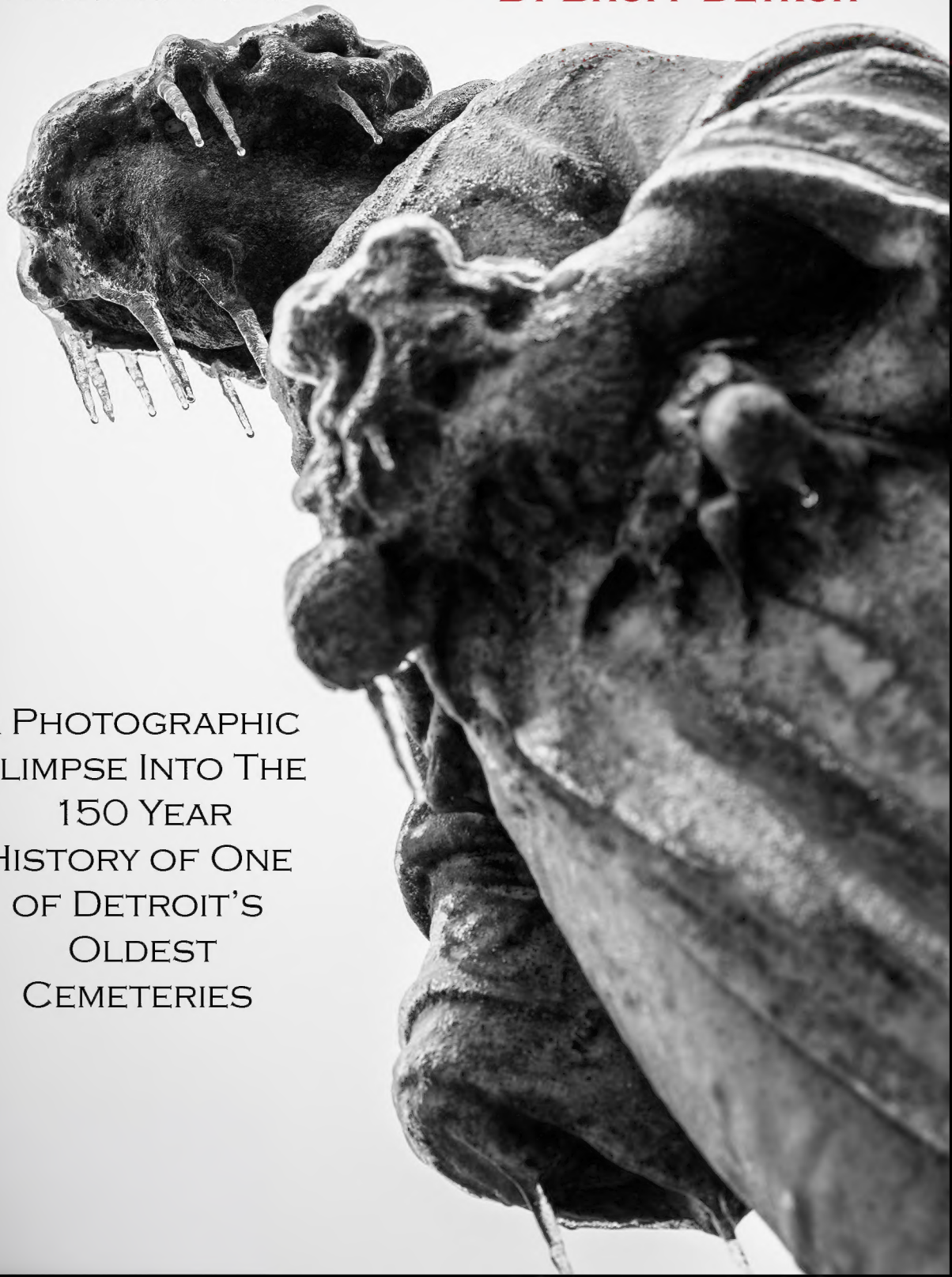
WOODMERE

A Detroit Story

By Bhoff Detroit



A Photographic Glimpse Into The 150 Year History of One of Detroit's Oldest Cemeteries

WOODMERE

BY

BHOFF DETROIT

BHOFF DETROIT MEDIA
DETROIT, MICHIGAN
2025

"life is divided into three parts: what was, what is and what shall be"
-Seneca

"history is more or less bunk"
-Henry Ford

To: L.Elizabeth, Wolfgang, Ignatius, Bella Lauren, and Faye

"The streetcar stops at the city limit, sir. If you wait til' Sunday, there'll be a trolley that'll take you all the way to the Cemetery..."

The old man nodded, familiar with the routine, having made the trip every week for the last five years, since his sweet Josefka passed away. Normally he'd take the cemetery trolley through Springwells Village to Woodmere, but he couldn't wait till Sunday.

Not this time. Not today.

"We're approaching the end of the line, Sir."

He got out, the sole remaining passenger, and looked toward his destination.

Fort Street narrowed into a muddy dirt road, surrounded by tall, ancient trees and thick brush. Deep wheel marks, slashed into the ground by the carriages that occasionally passed through, left it scarred and maimed. It reminded him of the pioneer days of his youth, when Detroit was a close-knit town, thriving off the land and the river, before the stove factories, mills, and foundries, before everything commercial, other than the lumbermen.

He was Frantisek then.

Now, in impatient times, everyone just calls him Frank.

Only his wife used his old name, and it's been years since he heard her sweetly say it.

The dreary October rain made for a long mile.

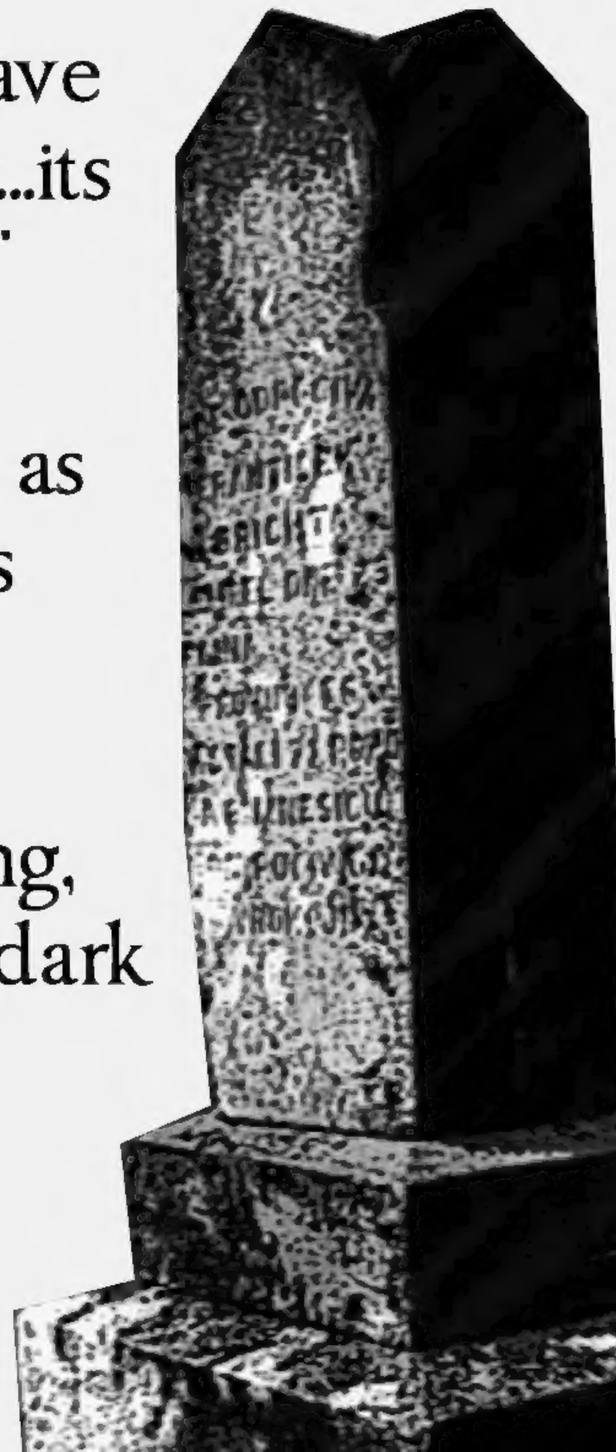
A violent draft continued to tug at the side of his coat. If his right pocket wasn't weighted down, he'd have to bear the frigid gusts entirely. The mist chilled his neck. He lifted his collar straight, high enough that it touched the short white bristles on his head and walked through the gates of Woodmere Cemetery.

He could see Baby Creek, narrowly curving along the western border. Beyond that, the River Rouge. When his children were young, they'd make the trip together, to catch a Saturday's supper. Though they preferred sitting at the banks with their tiny feet in the water. That was before the cemetery, but not so long ago, he thought.

He rounded along with the path, toward the lagoon, till he could kneel at his wife's grave. A black carriage, drawn by the blackest horse he'd ever seen, rode past. The last of the dark brown and orange leaves fell, with the clopping hoofs vibrations.

He looked toward the sky, the rain hiding the tears in his eyes,

"So dreary...but things have been so gray for so long...its nice to see a little color..."



So, he spoke to his wife, as he'd done so many times before.

"The days have been long, though its been getting dark so early, dear...."

He closed his eyes, steadying his breath.

"Our sons are doing fine, especially Charlie, though they all worry..."

Two birds dropped nearby, playfully tugging at a stick. As quickly as they both came, one flew away, leaving the other with the twig in its mouth; heavy for just one to hold.

"...they know how much I miss you, but soon...we'll be together..."

He began to notice the chill of the breeze again, his knees wet from the ground.

"...and we'll never let go."

He finished with a prayer, softly spoken, though he never rose. He reached down, and lightened his pocket. Through the iron bars of the gate, whistled the wind. Sparrows sang from the canopy of bare branches above. A few leaves danced in the air.

Frantisek brought the revolver to his head.

Silence.

He was found, the marble stone his pillow, by the groundskeeper. It was remarked how peaceful he looked, content even. He'd soon be buried next to his wife.

His story, like many others, an eternal specter of

WOODMERE CEMETERY.

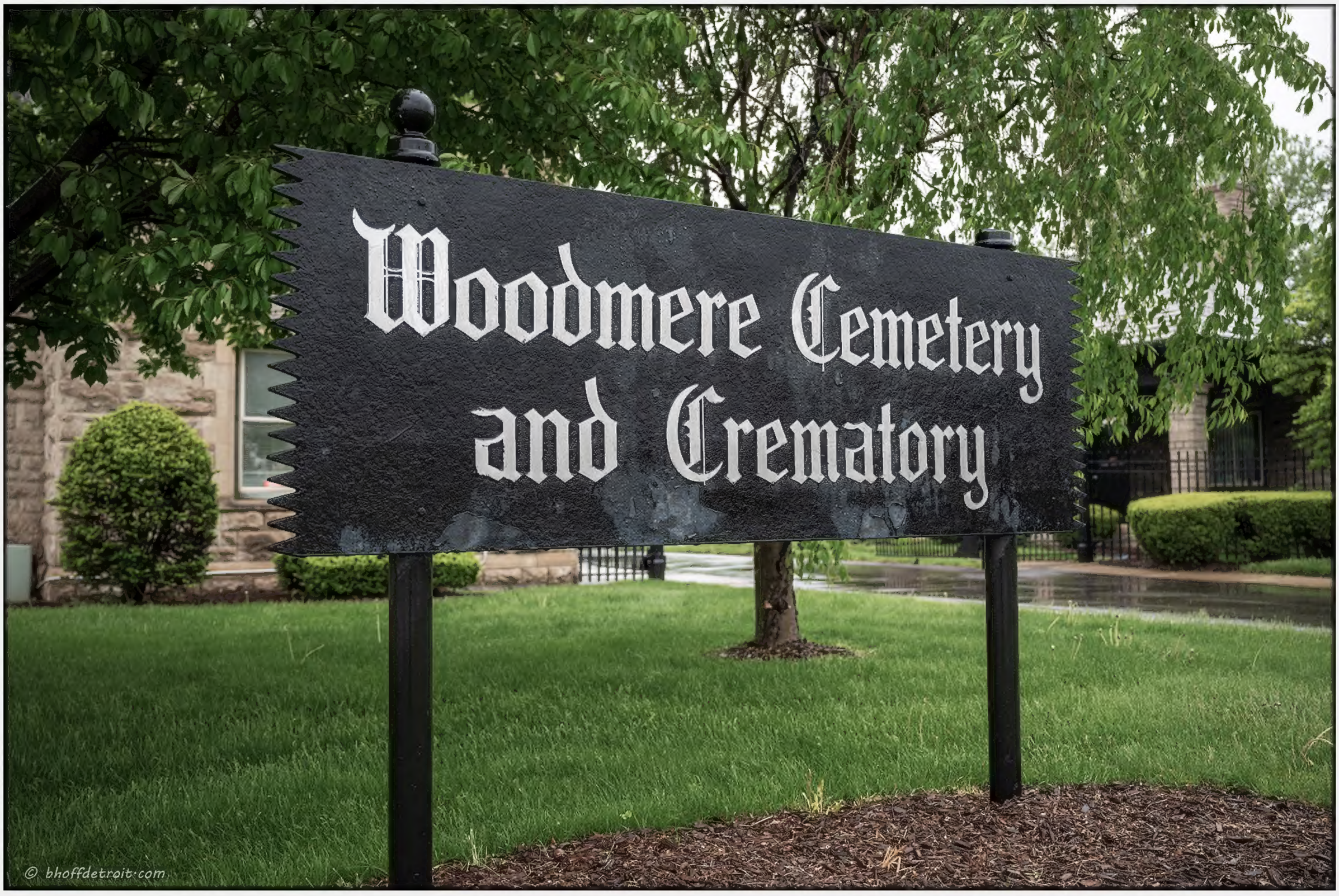
BESIDE HIS WIFE'S GRAVE.

FRANK BRICHTER COMMITTED SUICIDE IN WOODMERE CEMETERY.

Frantisek Brichta
(1824-1896)

Josefka Brichta
(1822-1891)

Together Again


Woodmere Cemetery
and Crematory
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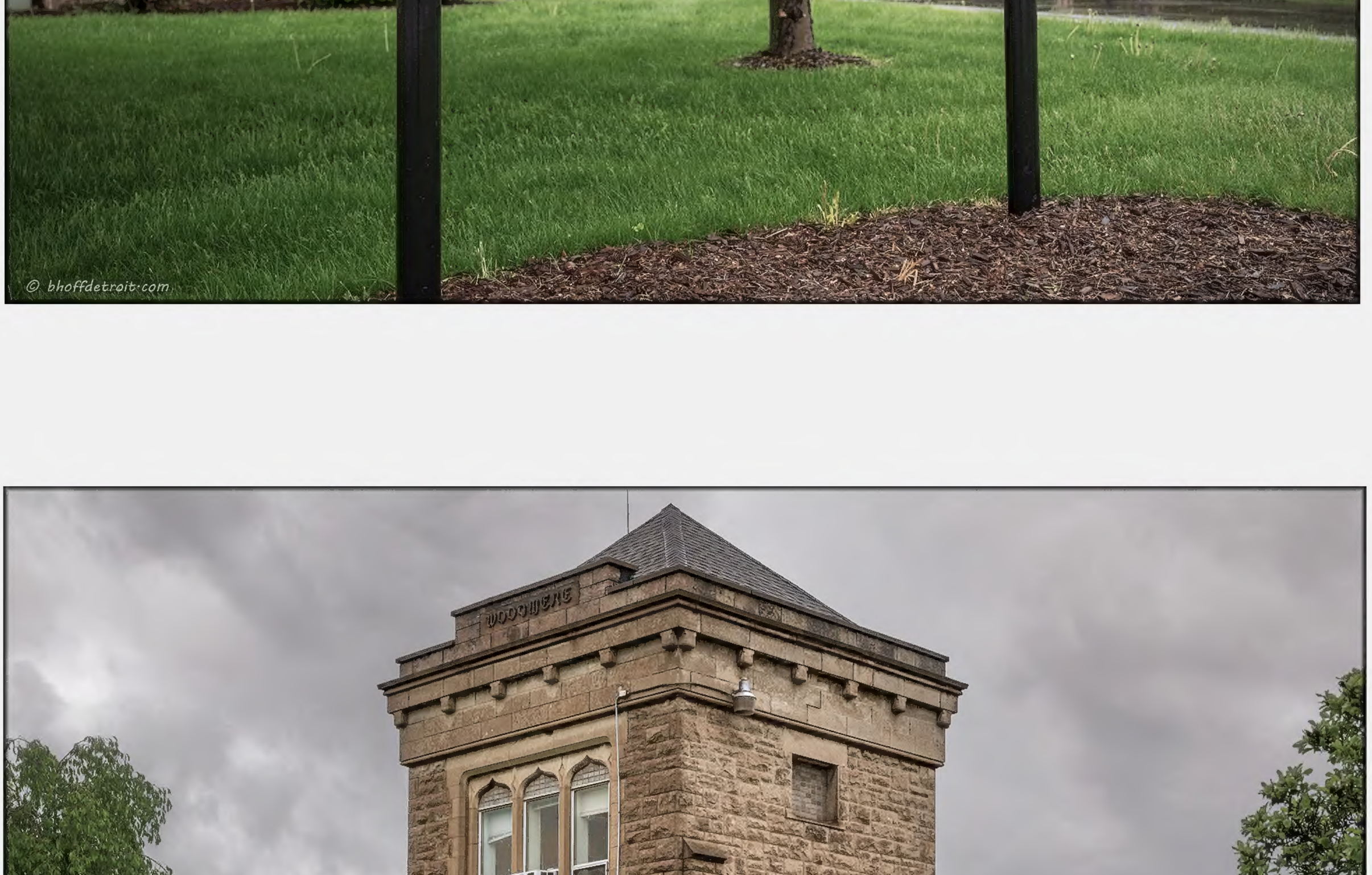
WOODMERE
NOTICE
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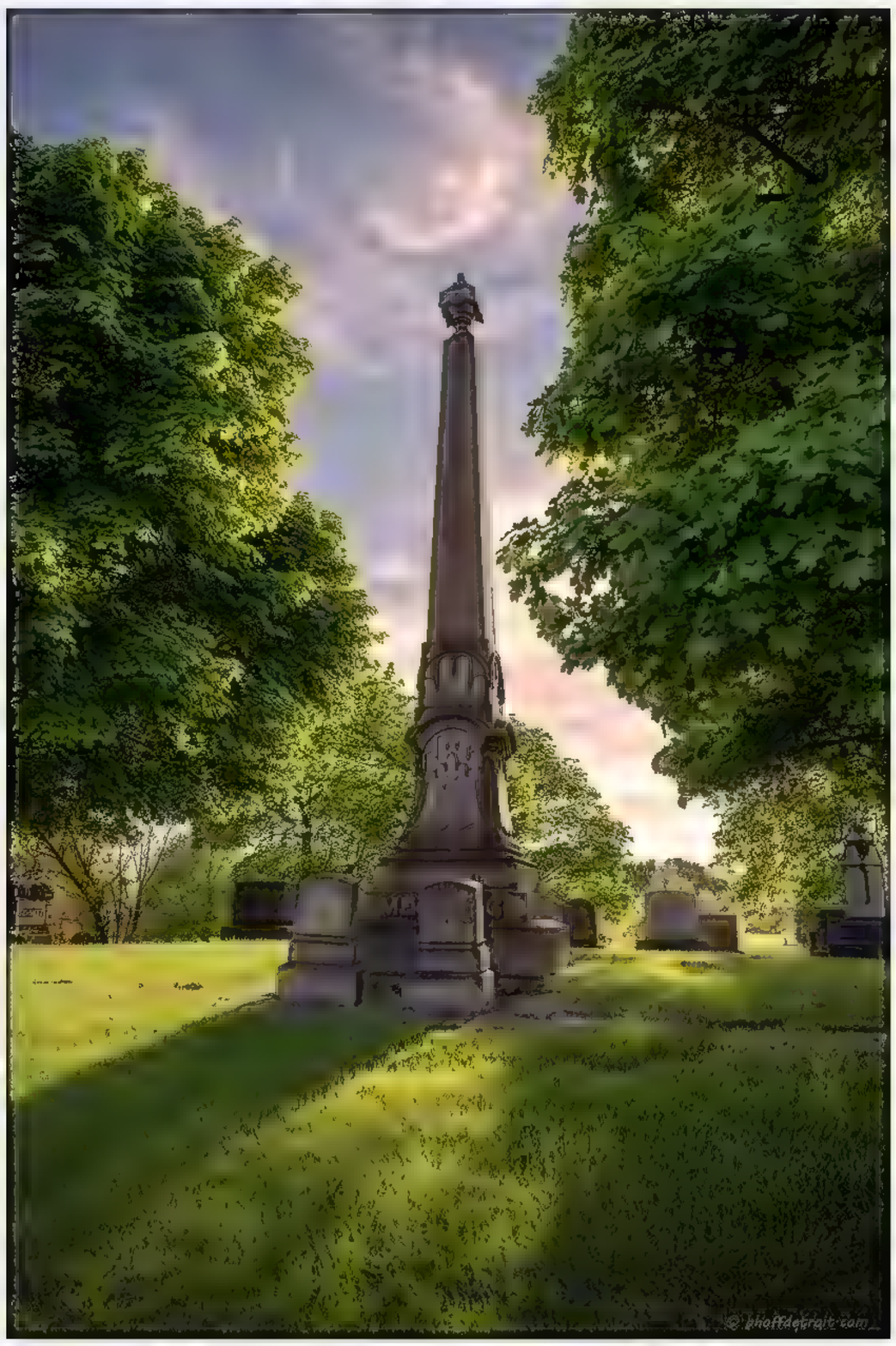
Woodmere Cemetery, founded in 1867, with an allotment of 230 acres in Springwells Village, has since expanded to just under 300 acres. Along its westernmost edge ran Baby Creek (pronounced Bawbee), flowed into Woodmere Lagoon. The creek was narrow but averaged a nine foot depth and a century before the cemetery, allowed the French to use the grounds as a shipyard. Baby creek become an enclosed sewer in 1959, one of several "lost water ways' in Detroit. Riverside Drive, on the Dearborn border, is now paved over it.

With the opening of Woodmere, remains from the small city cemeteries began to be transferred as the business districts quickly expanded, and account for some of it's oldest graves.

Ozias Williams Shipman
(1834-1898).

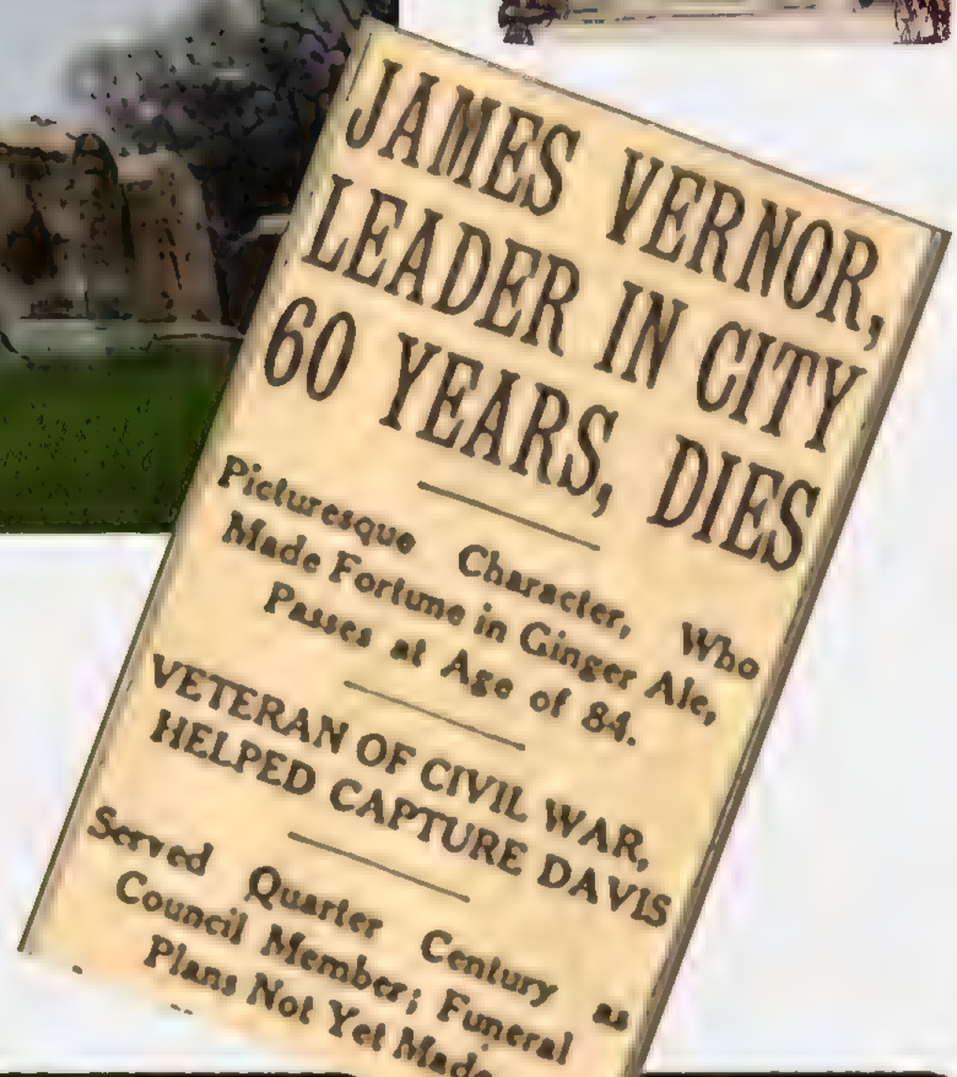
One of Detroit's most prosperous merchants, dealing mostly in coal--at one time suppling Michigan Central Railroad with 125 carloads of coal a day. Not many could claim to have, literally, fueled the growth of Detroit. Mayor Pingree appointed him Police Commissioner, which he served from 1893-1897.



D

John Valentine Mehling
(1819-1878).

A wholesale grocer. He died on his way back to Detroit from a European Trip, stopping at New York with an illness.


JAMES VERNOR, LEADER IN CITY 60 YEARS, DIES

Picturesque Character, Who Made Fortune in Ginger Ale, Passes at Age of 84.

VETERAN OF CIVIL WAR, HELPED CAPTURE DAVIS

Served Quarter Century as Council Member; Funeral Plans Not Yet Made.

James Vernor (1843-1927).

The man himself, the inventor of that bubbly ginger goodness, still drank today, Vernors Ginger Ale.

He was a member of the Michigan 4th Calvary that caught Confederate President, Jefferson Davis. Later he served on the City Council for 25 years, fighting for city improvements. But really, you aren't thanking him for any of those when you have an upset stomach...

Lake Woodmere or Woodmere Lagoon, both names have been used. It was once connected to Baby Creek by the even narrower Deer Creek that ran through the cemetery. Deer Creek is gone, and Baby Creek is enclosed, but Lake Woodmere remains--though with much less size than it originally had.

Woodmere Lagoon

Work Progresses on Baby Creek

Work progresses on the Baby Creek enclosure, the mile-long $4,775,000 joint Dearborn-Detroit sewer project which will drain the waters of Baby Creek. A view west of Riverside Drive (facing south), shows concrete being poured from a large bucket lifted by a giant crane over a section of the mammoth sewer enclosure. At left, a piling fence of inter-locking steel sheathing, holds back the waters of Baby Creek. Steel helmeted men in the bottom of the enclosure are putting in steel rod reinforcements prior to pouring of concrete. Trees on left are in Woodmere cemetery (city limits). Dearborn's share of this huge sewer project will be approximately $1,600,000.00

Left: Baby Creek work in progress July 21, 1961. Woodmere to the left. Dearborn Historial Museum.

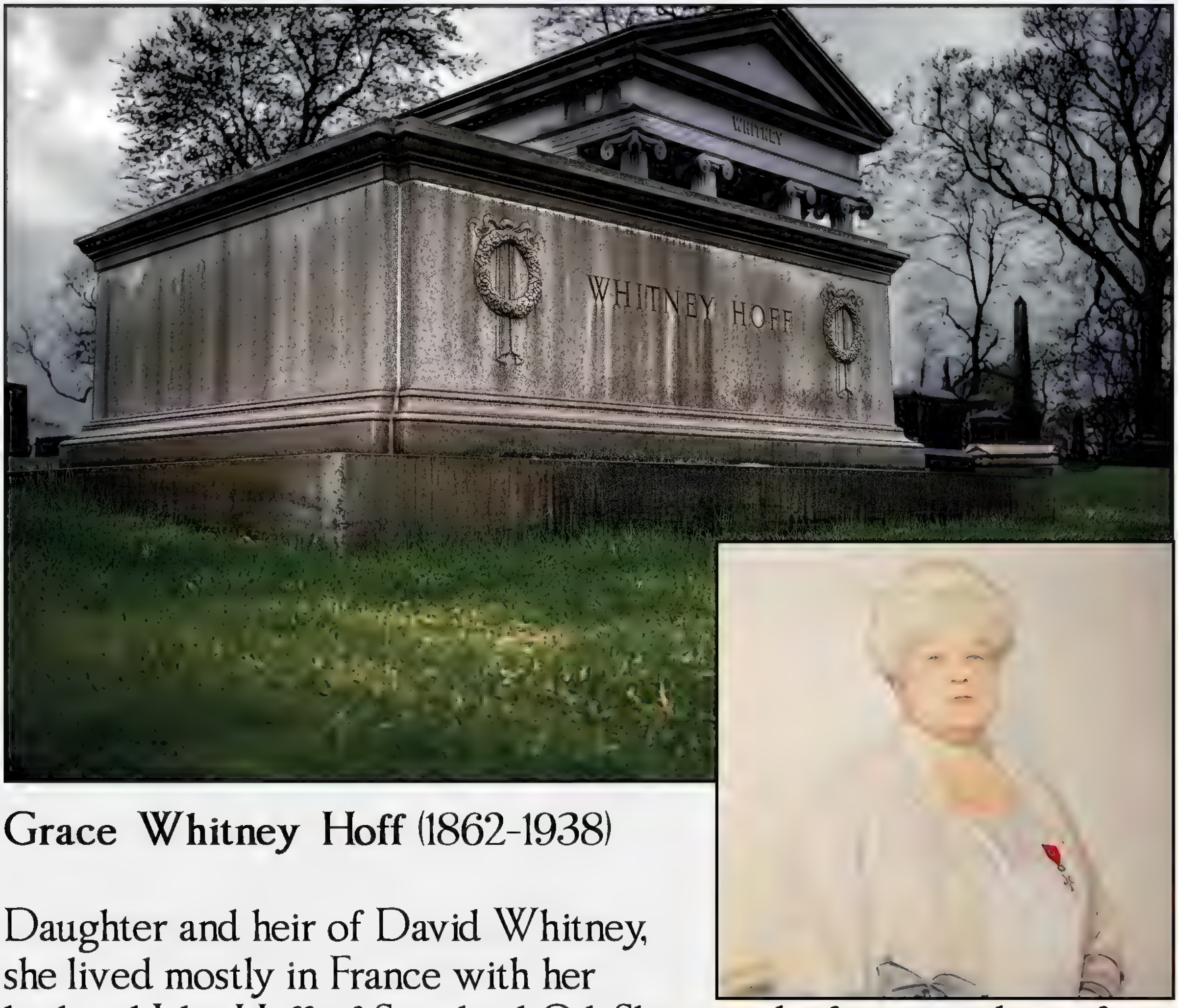
Above: Woodmere Lagoon. 1800s. Burton Historical Collection.

Charles W. Bennett
(1854-1927)

A popular Detroit Tigers catcher, he's credited for creating the first catcher's chest protector. He was forced to retire after losing both his legs in a train accident in 1894. The Tiger's home park was named Bennett Park in his honor, and used from 1896 to 1911, when it was replaced by Navin Field. Mayor Thompson had the privilege of throwing the first pitch at the new park, but Charlie Bennett was there to catch it.

David Whitney (1830-1900)

At the time of his death, he was the richest man in Detroit, making his fortune in the lumber industry, followed by various other investments. If you're ever in the mood for Beef Wellington, head over to his former mansion on Woodward, now the Whitney restaurant. And let me know how it is! Cause I got more of Duly's Place Coney Island budget



Grace Whitney Hoff (1862-1938)

Daughter and heir of David Whitney, she lived mostly in France with her husband John Hoff of Standard Oil. She was the first president of YWCA and a long time Detroit philanthropist

Joseph Black (d. 1891)

Dry good wholesaler and banker. His monument reads: "Until the day break and the shadows flee away."

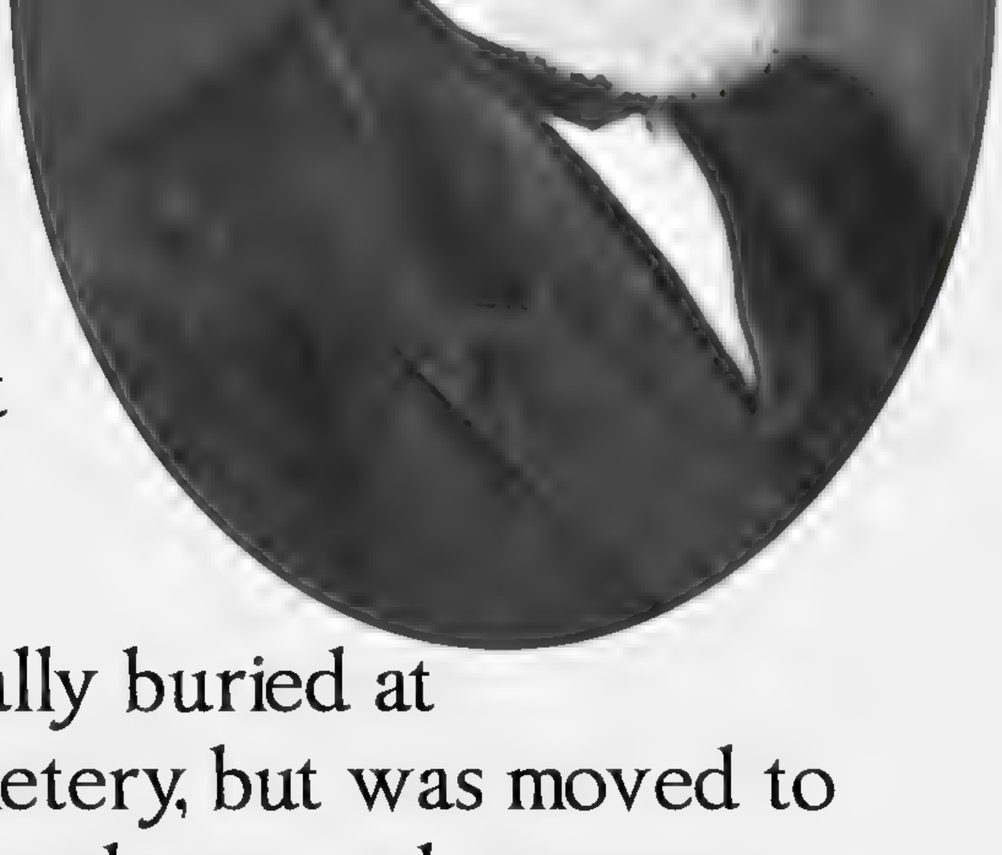
William Northcoat Rowe (1830–1919).

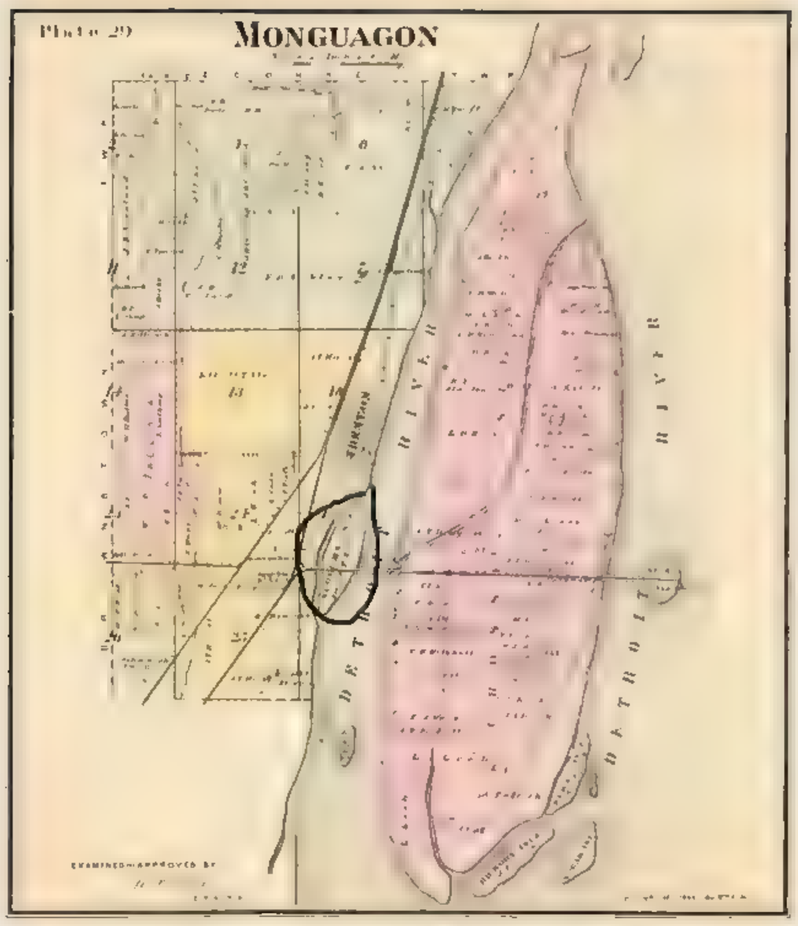
Lizzie St. Clair Gregory (d. January 8, 1883, 7 years old).

Allie Schmidt (1880-1883)

Giles Bryan Slocum (1808-1884).
Sophia Truax Slocum (1818-1912).
Elizabeth Truax Nichols (1849-1917).

Giles Slocum, a railroader, was an original organizer of the Republican Party at Jackson, Michigan in 1854. He was a large landowner, and helped found Toledo, OH (don't hold that against him).





He was originally buried at Elmwood Cemetery, but was moved to Woodmere after the mausoleum was completed. His residence on Slocum Island would be passed down to his daughter, Elizabeth Truax Slocum-Nichols (1849-1917). After her death it was donated to the City of Trenton, and named Elizabeth Park in her honor.

Hamilton Carhartt
(1855-1937)

Founder of the Carhartt Company, everyone's favorite in light brown and beige fashion--occasionally, so I've heard, some even work in it. He operated the business for fifty years, becoming one of the richest men in Detroit.

From Boss of the Head
to Parlor Brakema
Carhartt's
Have Been Tops for Over 50 Yea
There are thousands of old time railroaders—engineers and firemen, brakemen, section hands, yard crews and roundhouse mechanics who swear by the extra value and comfort fit Carhartts into Carhartt overalls.
Carhartts are one brand of work clothes that have "stayed put" in quality materials and workmanship, and has constantly improved in design, tailoring and fit. Carhartts stand up to any job just as the Carhartt family has stood by the Railroad Unions for well over half a century.
That is a record we're proud of, just as you're proud of the public acceptance and confidence the Railroad Brotherhoods enjoy today. Let's keep up the good work. We'll build the best union made overalls money can buy. Stand by the men that have stood by you! Wear Carhartt Union Label Overalls.
THE HAMILTON CARHARTT OVERALL CO.
Carhartt
LOOK FOR IT

He and his wife died in a car accident, on their way to pick up their granddaughter from school, only a block away from their house

Daniel Scotten
(1819-1899)

D

Prominent Tobacco Dealer.

Woman, Son Convicted
Of Murdering Roomer

DETROIT. Oct. 7.—Mrs. Rose Veres, Hungarian rooming house keeper, and her son, William, 18, were convicted Monday night of killing Steve Mak, a lodger, by trowing him from a second story window, to realize on insurance policies Mrs. Veres carried on his life.

They will be sentenced Oct. 18. Mak was the 12th lodger in the Veres home to die within eight years, most of them investigators

Rose Veres
(1877-1960)
The "Witch of Delray."

Running a boarding house in the Delray neighborhood of Detroit, she was suspected of murdering 11 men, including her husband. She was finally arrested for murder of Steve Mak, a boarder who she had taken a life insurance policy out on. Witnesses say they seen her push him out of the attic window on August 23, 1931. In a trial, filled with superstition and circumstantial evidence, she was convicted of murder and sentenced life, along with her 'accomplice' son. In 1945, attorney Alean Clutts, won Veres' freedom, in a retrial, after serving fourteen years.

APRIL 3, 1932.
While a Little Girl Watched the Old Gray Witch of Medina Street—
—The Hungarian Widow's Twelfth Boarder Tumbled to His Death, But Marie of the Mud Pies Saw All, and Told!
Rose Veres
"The Witch of Medina Street"

"It was three people who stole the body. They broke into a different mausoleum first and tried to remove a body which had been inserted backwards and so they pulled on the on the head and dislodged it and took the skull and placed it on their ex landlord's porch. They then broke into the Ferris mausoleum and removed the entire remains of Alfred Ferris carried him over the hills in the cemetery raised him over the iron fence on the woodmere side and took him three doors down on Homer and laid him on the hood of my best friend's car directly under a street light. It was a complete body head to toe he even still had beautiful tiger eye cufflinks and a Mason's pin in his lapel. I was also there and was the one who contacted Mr Mathis to let him know the cemetery had been broken into. We met him at the front gate along with the police who entered the cemetery and as we drove around there were numerous headstones that had been knocked over and broken. There were a few mausoleums that had bent or broken metal doors on and they finally picked up a headstone and threw it through the doors of the Ferris mausoleum. I have pictures of all of it to this day. The body was reentombed, and the mausoleum was finally permanently sealed."

-Kim Gibson, Witness.

Potter and Ferris Mausoleums

Edmund Potter (1840-1901)

Alfred G. Ferris (1842-1918)

The Mausoleum was permanently sealed in 1985, after it was vandalized, and the body of Alfred Ferris stolen. Remains were recovered and vandals prosecuted.

Free Press Photo by CRAIG PORTER

The mausoleum for a family named Ferris at Woodmere Cemetery was broken into Wednesday night.

SKULL FOUND ON PORCH

"I owned a white car parked under a street light. They realized what they had and had to get rid of it fast. They were tracked down and arrested and did time. Karma is for real!!!!!"

-Bill Elgert, Witness

Henry Leland
(1843-1932)

Henry Leland (1843-1932)
"The maker and founder of high-class automobiles."
Summoned to clean up Henry Ford's mess after he abandoned the first Fordmobile, it led to his founding of Cadillac Motors in 1902. He'd sell the company to General Motors in 1909 for $4.5 million. He stayed with GM until 1917, when he left and founded Lincoln Motors. Ironically, an unsuccessful run in the market led to him selling the company to Henry Ford in 1922.

David D. Buick (1854-1929)

Founder of Buick Motors. He established the company in 1899, designing a revolutionary engine (variants of which are still used today) by 1902. The company would struggle with financing, until Buick sold the company to William Durant in 1904. Durant, marketing David Buick's product, turned the companies fortunes around, becoming the best selling car in America.

He'd catapult this success to found General Motors in 1908. David Buick, through bad investments, died penniless, an instructor at a trade school, his name on one of the highest selling cars out of Detroit.

The Kahn Family

...just not Albert, he's at White Chapel Memorial Park in Troy.

Joseph Kahn (1845-1935). The 'dreamer' of the family. He started a restaurant in Detroit, before spending twenty years as a traveling Rabbi, setting up new synagogues, stabilizing them, then moving on, in between returns to Detroit. The patriarch of the Kahn family.

Rosalie Kahn (1843-1912). The matriarch and strength of the Kahn family.

The Kahn family, 1888

Louis Kahn (1886-1945)

Albert Kahn's youngest brother. Of course, he was also an architect, University of Michigan Grad, and the President of Albert Kahn Associated Architects and Engineers.

Albert Kahn, William Knudsen, and Louis Kahn
1939

Moritz Kahn (1879-1939)

Vice President of Albert Kahn, Inc. He was the chief designer of the Soviet Union's industrial program in the early 1930s.

KAHN SYSTEM
Reinforced Concrete

Elk's Rest.

Dedicated on October 30, 1892, the monument was erected by the Detroit Elks Lodge 34, who bought a section for their members. The bronze Elk is currently in storage after an attempted theft left the statue vandalized.

David Vartanian (1890-1966)

On April 15, 1912, the unsinkable ship, Titanic, hit an iceberg taking out five of its airtight compartments and began to sink, bow first. A third class passenger--where 84% of the passengers perished--he was one of seventy five to survive. He went on to live his life in Michigan, working at McLouth Steel--probably having the best break room story to tell.

"It was my great-grandfather's (David Vartanian, Titanic Survivor) 22nd birthday when the Titanic sank. He spent the first many years in the States in Pennsylvania and only moved to Detroit when his daughter, my grandmother Rose got married to my grandfather, who was born and raised in Detroit." -Jen Vartanian Gillet, Great Grand Daughter

Right: David Vartanian walking his daughter, Rose, down the aisle.

Emma Wilkewitz (1891-1917). Corpse Stolen August 1926.

GHOULS LOOT WOMAN'S GRAVE

Body Buried Nine Years Taken From Woodmere Cemetery, Police Learn.

Police are working on one of the most mysterious grave-robbing cases ever to come to their notice, it having been learned Wednesday that the body of Mrs. Emma Wilkewitz, who was 26 years old when she was buried in Woodmere cemetery on February 27, 1917, had been removed from its grave eaily Sunday morning.

The open grave was discovered by the cemetery caretaker Sunday morning, but he was unable to notify the dead woman's husband, William K. Wilkewitz, 6533 Linzee avenue, since he was not in possession of the address. Wilkewitz's son chanced to enter the cemetery Sunday on his regular visit to his mother's grave and noticed a crowd standing around the open space.

He found that the cover of the "rough box," which encloses the coffin proper, had been smashed to bits with some heavy blunt instrument and the cover of the coffin itself also demolished.

Wilkewitz, when questioned about a possible motive, declared that the gold ring and gold chain and locket which his wife wore when buried were of too insignificant an intrinsic value to warrant robbery of the grave.

"I can't understand why they should have picked on my wife's grave," he said Wednesday, "because it stands in the least pretentious section of the cemetery and the stone that marks it is a very plain one."

The affair marks the second robbery attempt in the past month, the caretaker of the cemetery declaring that ghouls recently had made an attempt to enter a mausoleum, but found the solid construction of the vault too much for their efforts.

Above: Looking toward Dearborn's Ford Rouge Plant

Below: The graves of the "The Hunger March Four" with the Ford Rouge Plant lurking in the distance.

"The Hunger March Victims"

Initially organized by leading communists, the Hunger March took a life of its own. In the midst of the Great Depression, Detroit reached a 50% unemployment rate (its currently at around 20%). On March 7, 1932, 2,000 unemployed workers, lured by Ford Company jobs only a decade before from across the nation, were desperate, angry, and in need. They took to the streets, organizing near Woodmere cemetery, and marched toward the Ford Factory's Gate 2. Peacefully, they were allowed to march through Detroit, though they were met with heavy resistance at the Dearborn border--a city, essentially owned by Henry Ford. Dearborn Firemen turned high powered hoses on them, blasting ice cold winter water. Dearborn Police pummeled with night sticks. The crowd retaliated, throwing rocks and dirt. Tensions escalated, and Dearborn police and Ford Security began to shoot live ammunition into the crowd. Sixty marchers were injured, and four were shot dead--a fifth would die a few weeks later. Though the communist organizers had lofty goals, Ford's aggressive response tarnished his public reputation. On March 12, 1932, 60,000 people marched with the dead to their common grave at Woodmere. The march set the groundwork for unionization, and in 1941, Ford recognized the UAW, giving it one of the best contracts in the auto industry.

WEATHER
Cloudy and continued cold Tuesday and Wednesday, with occasional snow flurries.

The Detroit Free Press
1831 — OVER A CENTURY OF SERVICE — 1932

METROPOLITAN
FINAL EDITION

101st Year. No. 309 — TUESDAY, MARCH 8, 1932 — 26 Pages — THREE CENTS

4 DIE IN RIOT AT FORD PLANT

Baby's Kidnapers Send Two Notes to Lindbergh

CHILD IS SAFE, NEW LETTERS TELL PARENTS

Governor Says Mail Now Goes Directly to Family

SENATE DELAYS ACTION ON LAW

HOPEWELL, N. J., March 7— AP— Information that the kidnapers of Charles Augustus Lindbergh Jr. have been in communication with his parents came to-night from an apparently authoritative source.

Two notes were received Sunday by the Lindberghs. One was typewritten, but handwriting experts said the other was in the same writing as a ransom demand left here late Tuesday night by the kidnapers before they fled with the child.

The notes were on the same kind

TEAR GAS BOMBS HURLED AS RIOT RAGES IN DEARBORN

MURDER CHARGES ASKED AFTER RED MOB FIGHTS POLICE

Communists Inflamed by Foster Hurl Stones and Clubs in Pre-arranged Outbreak

Harry Bennett and Others in Hospital Following Battle Started When Agitator Fires Six Shots

Six shots fired by a Communist hiding behind a parked car were cited by police Monday night as the match which touched off a riot at the Ford Motor Co. plant, Miller Road, early in the afternoon in which four men were killed and 29 seriously injured.

Scores of others among some 2,500 rioters were beaten and bruised before they were dispersed by Dearborn and Detroit police, State troopers and deputy sheriffs with pistols, shotguns and tear gas.

Harry Bennett, head of the Ford Service Department, was wounded and is in Henry Ford Hospital, not in danger. Stories conflict as to how he was injured.

Three May Face Murder Charges

The graves were left unmarked until 1992, when UAW Local 600 retirees placed the current markers at their grave.

Left:
Funeral of the Ford Hunger March Victims at Woodmere.

March 12, 1932

On March 12 1932 an estimated 60,000-strong funeral procession accompanied the slain workers' caskets to Woodmere Cemetery

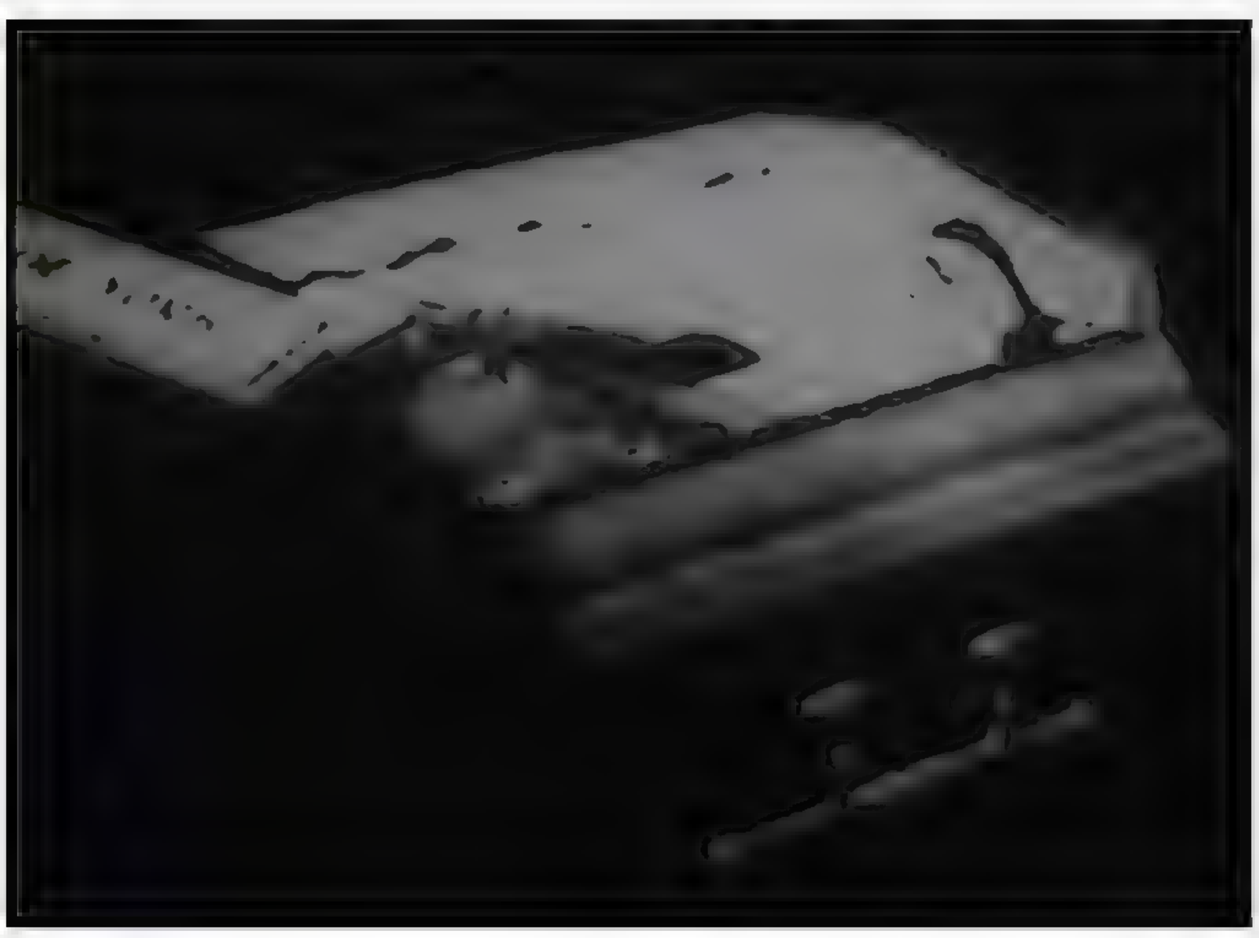
Joseph Bussell
(1915-1932)

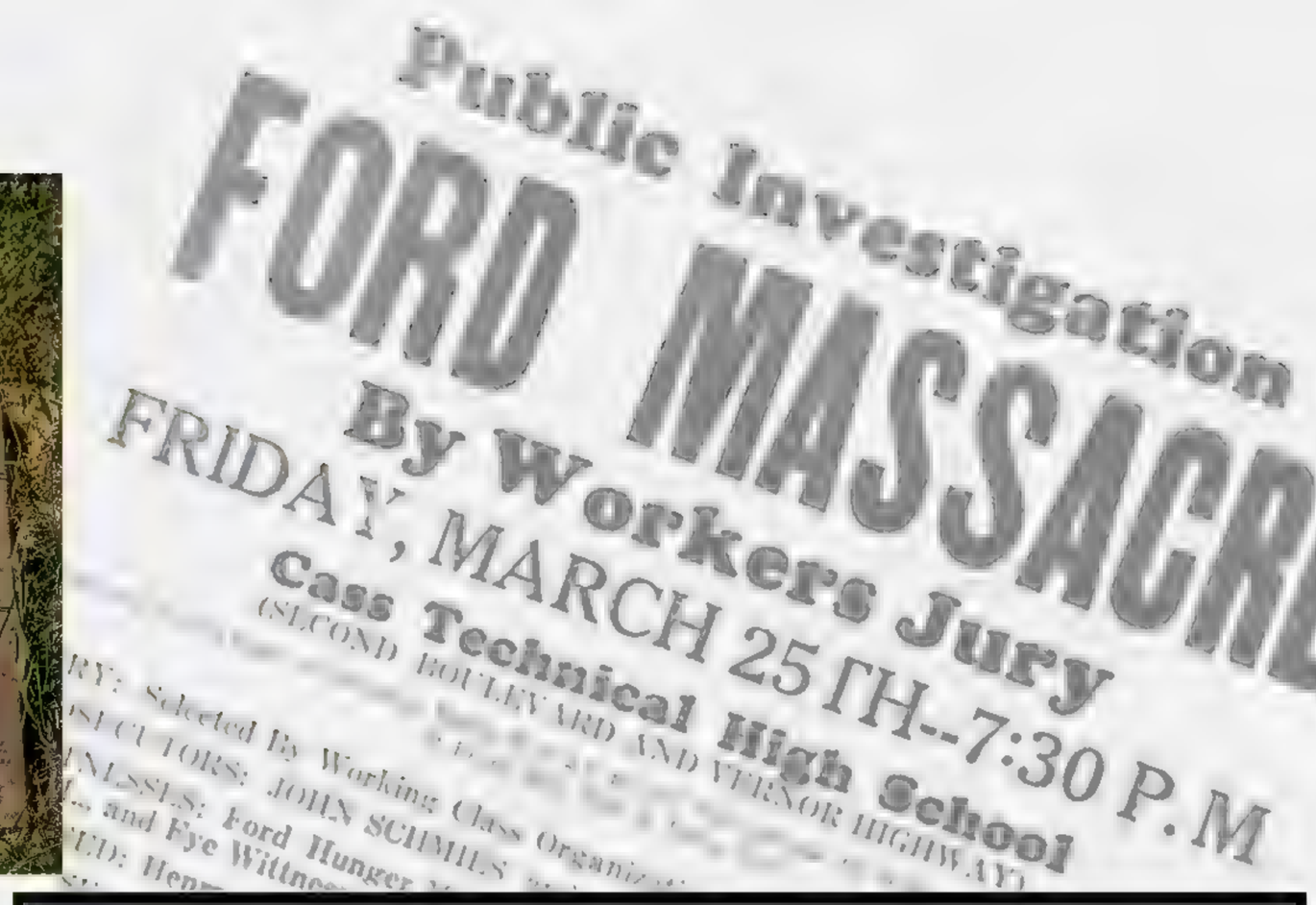
The 16 year old Northwestern student was the youngest casualty. He was well known outside the Ford Rouge gates as 'Newsboy Joe.' An enthusiastic radical, he was shot in the chest while approaching the Ford Gates.

Joe DeBlasio (1900-1932).
He immigrated from Italy in 1925. He was shot dead on Miller Road.

Joe York
(1912-1932).
Twenty years old. Died from a bullet
to his chest.

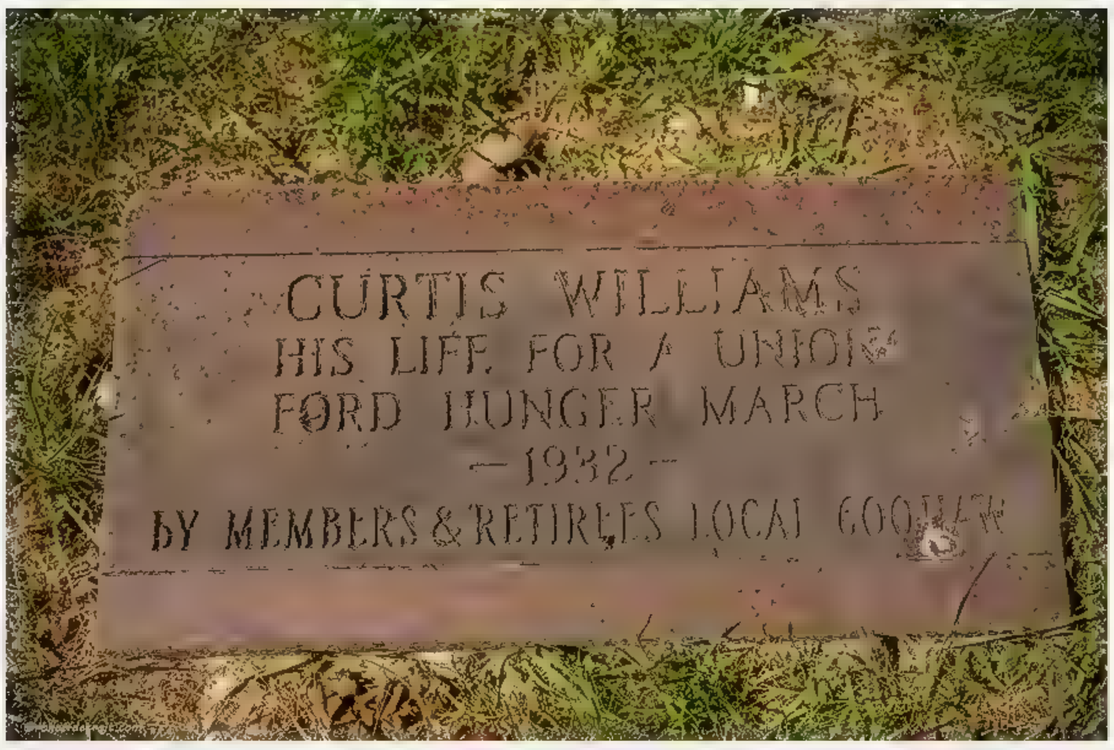
Joe York
1912 - 1932





Kalman (Coleman) Leny (1905-1932)

From Belleville, he took a bullet to the head, dying immediately as Dearborn Police opened fire on the crowd.



Curtis Williams (1895-1932).

The thirty six year old suffered injuries during the march and died three months later. He was cremated, and there's speculation that his remains were scattered at Woodmere, though there's other fanciful stories, such as being scattered over the Ford Rouge Plant by plane. The marker was placed next to the others to honor his role and death in the hunger march in 1992.

James Scripps
(1835-1906)

Famed newspapermen, founded the Evening News in 1873, which become The Detroit News. One of the leading founders of Detroit Museum of Art.

The mausoleum was built in 1887, designed by Herbert Langford Warren.

Benjamin Siegel
(1860-1936)

Founder of the B. Siegel company in 1885, a name synonymous with upscale women's clothing in Detroit, until the store finally shuttered in the 1980s. Mausoleum built in 1908, the doors were stolen in 2012.

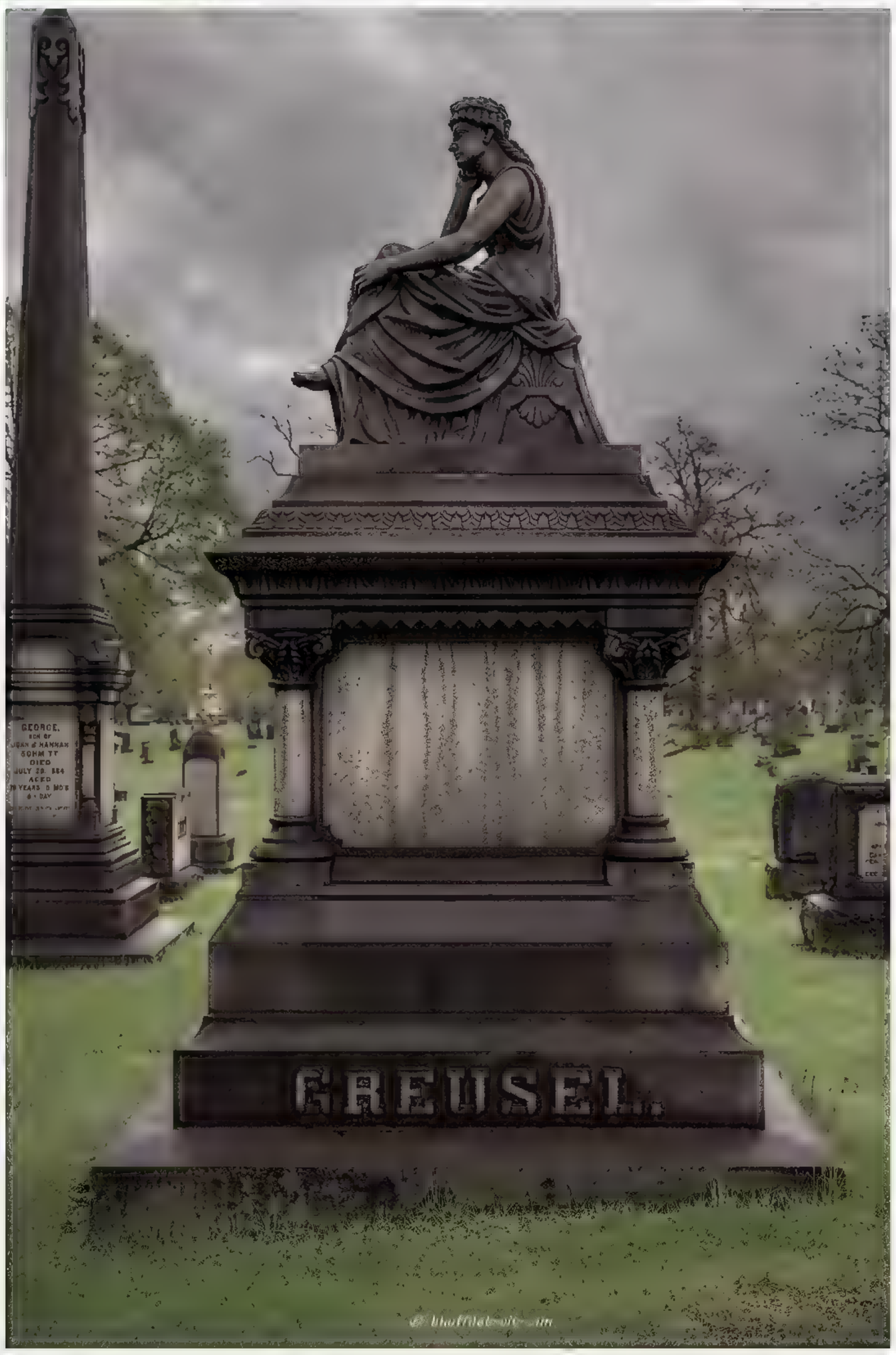
Above: B. Siegel Store at State Street and Woodward Avenuse.

B. SIEGEL CO.

Store Hours: 9:15 a. m. to 5:45 p. m. daily

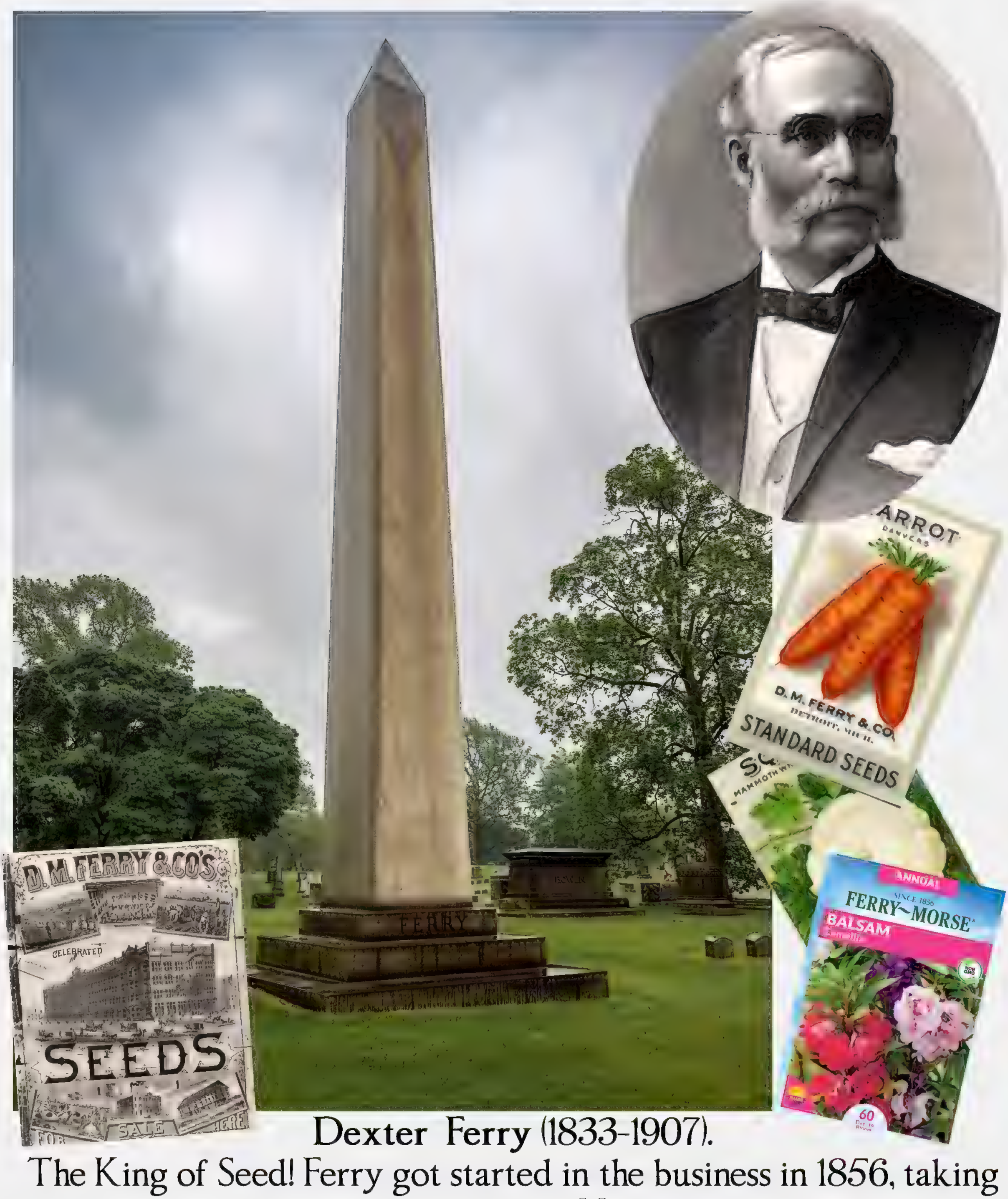
Richard Macauley
(1838-1908)

Merchant of women's hats. Established the firm Macauley and Walmsley in 1865, he bought out his partner in 1901, with the firm becoming R. Macauley and Company.



John Greusel, Sr
(1809-1886)

He went into business as a brick maker and later in real estate, making a fortune. He became the Springwells Township treasurer, then after getting involved in Republican Party politics, he became a popular State Senator.



Dexter Ferry (1833-1907).

The King of Seed! Ferry got started in the business in 1856, taking over the firm he partnered in, in 1865. He expanded operations from its meager beginnings into a multimillion dollar organization. He was the first to sell seeds in the small 'gardener' packets that are still bought today. He helped found the Detroit Museum of Art, and was heavily invested in growing the city of Detroit. He donated Ferry Field to the University of Michigan, the previous home to Wolverine football before the "Big House."

Jerome Bishop
(1846-1928)

Fur trader and politician. He was elected for his first term as Mayor of Wyandotte in 1884. After taking time off after one term, he was reelected in 1905, serving three more terms. He founded Wyandotte's first library and donated the riverfront property that became Bishop Park.

Cosmos Widman
(1845-1883)

Founder of the C.D. Widman Company, manufacturing mirrors and furniture. The company began at Fort Street and Randolph before expanding into the Milwaukee Junction district.

"My brother's and I attended Higgens Elementary off Olivet and Woodmere. We walk to school in all weather from Falcon to Oliver. Across the street is Woodmere. My school would march to the unknown soldiers grave to pay respect on Veterans day. We would lay a flower on each headstone. There is also a woman who was buried there amongst the soldiers. She was an officers house maid in Fort Wayne who suffered loneliness and depression and took her life. To Honor her, the officer and the stationed soldiers buried her there amongst their fallen comrades"-Steven Dominguez

Thomas G. Whittaker (1850-1933). A prominent sewer contractor for the city. Many of the lines he put in are still in use. Being the Sewer King of Detroit doesn't sound like much, but clearly it was profitable.

William R. Hill (1813-1882)

Weathered

Joseph Donovan (1839-1933)

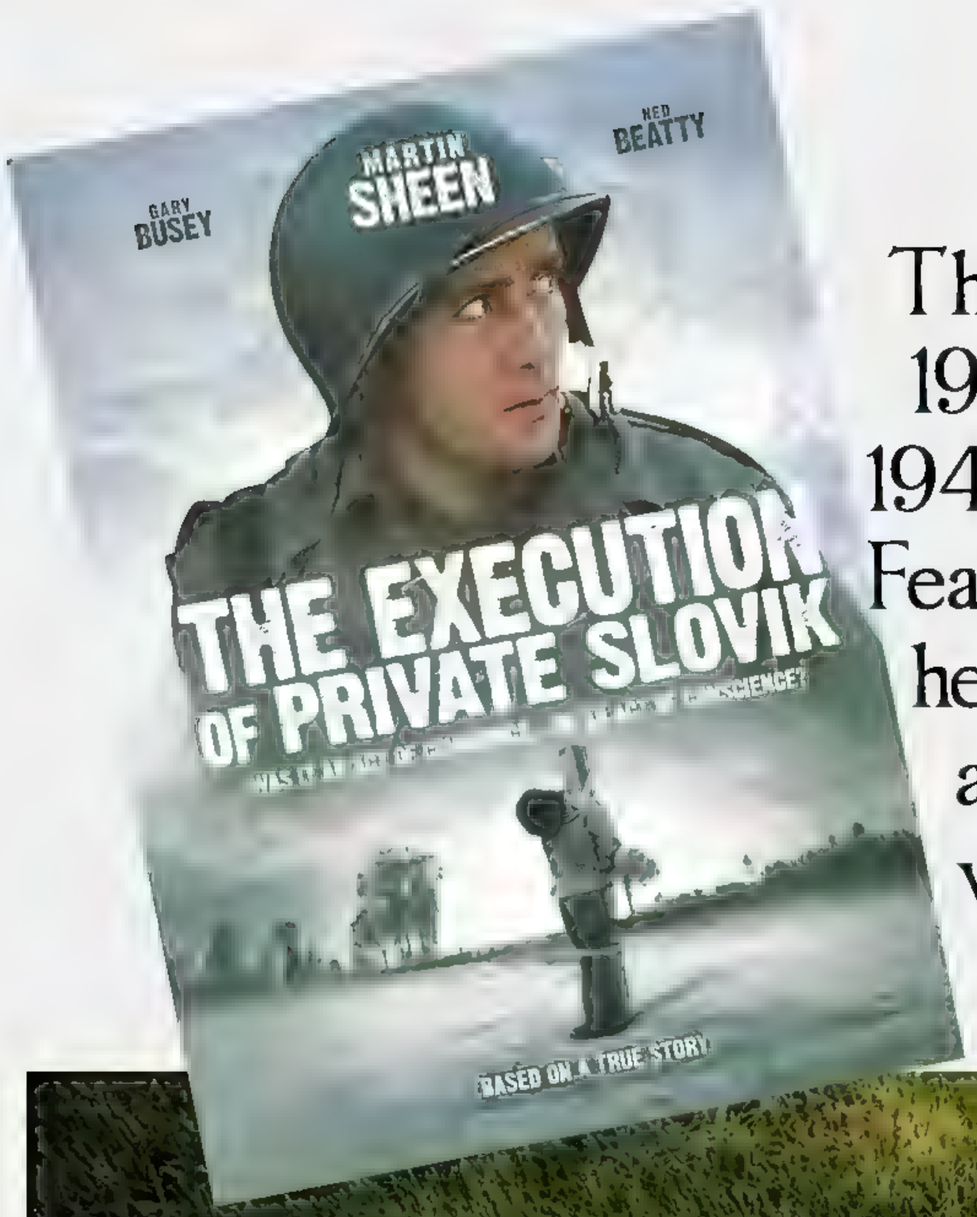
A respected Lawyer, he went on to become a Judge on the Wayne County Circuit Court.

John McLeod (1852-1911)

Well known wholesale dealer, a partner and secretary of the Standart Brothers Co.

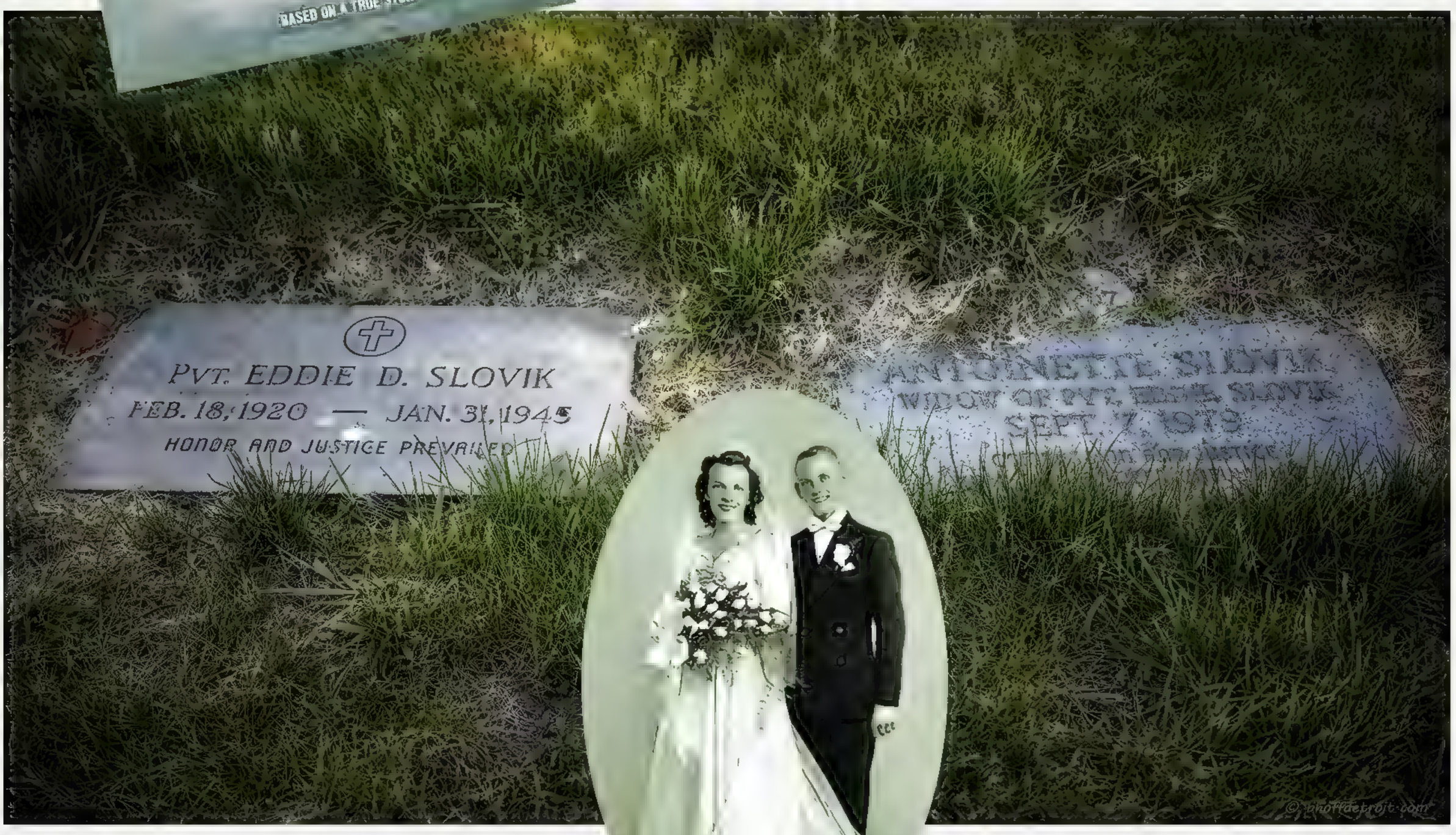
Samuel Caskey (1828-1905).

A city pioneer, which means he was around when Detroit was just a fur and log town. He was a City Councilman, and a partner in the A.C. McGraw firm, producing boots and shoes, helping lay the 'industrial and commercial' foundations of Detroit.



Eddie Slovik (1920-1945)
Antoinette Slovik (1915-1979)

The couple were married on November 7, 1942, before Eddie was drafted in early 1944 as a rifleman and sent to France. Fearful of guns, and war, and being killed, he deserted his unit a number of times, as more than 20,000 had done during the war. Unfortunately, Slovik had the rare distinction of being sentenced to death.



The sentence was sanctioned by General Eisenhower, and Eddie became the first soldier since the Civil War to be executed for Desertion, three months before the German surrender. He was buried in France, next to rapists and murderers.

Antoinette spent years after his death, fighting for a pardon and retrieving his remains. She passed away before either, her marker inscribed, "Compassion and Justice, Unto This Moment Unfulfilled." A pardon has never come, but President Reagan was persuaded to order the return of his remains in 1987. He was interred next his wife at Woodmere, his marker inscribed, "Honor and Justice Prevailed."

Dr. Frank Lydston Newman
(1858-1934)

Professor at Detroit College of Medicine and one of the leading surgeons in Detroit

James Findlater
(1839-1911)

Stonecutter, undertaker, but most prominently known for being the most famous Mason in Michigan, and one of the most decorated in the nation.

Simon J. Murphy (1815-1905) William H. Murphy (1855-1929

Lumberman, citrus farmer, oilman, real estate developer, Murphy had some serious cash. He helped develop several buildings downtown, including the first Penobsot building, named after the river in Maine where, in his early years, he worked in the lumber trade. His son William used some of that lumber dough to co-found the Cadillac Motor Company.

Upper Left: Simon Jones Murphy

Left: William Herbert Murphy

Below: Letter Head of the Simon J. Murphy Company

Simon J. Murphy Company

PENOBSCOT BUILDING

OWNER OF
PENOBSCOT BUILDING
MARQUETTE BUILDING
TELEGRAPH BUILDING
MURPHY BUILDING

W. M. MacLACHLAN, PRESIDENT

DETROIT, MICH.

James Sinclair Stridiron
(1824-1876)

He was a worker for the Fort Wayne and Elmwood Railway Company.

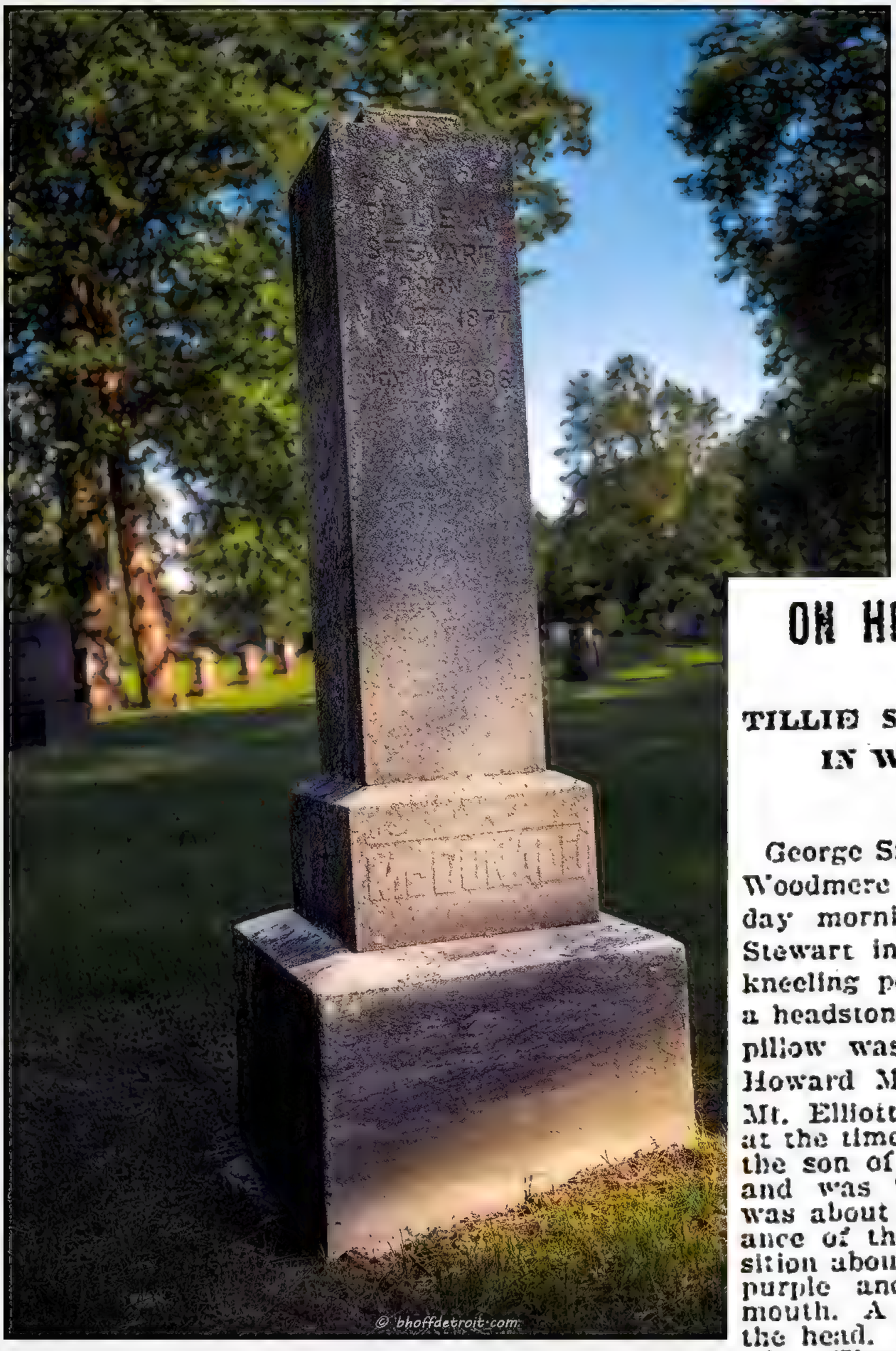
An example of a "white bronze" (zinc) monument by "Corinthian Monuments."
These were developed in 1868 by M. A. Richardson, who then sold the patent to Wilson, Parsons, and Company. Soon after they took the name "Monumental Bronze" and were in production from 1874 to 1914. Marketed as cheaper and longer lasting alternatives to stone, they eventually fell out of favor. Being hollow, they were popular "drop" location for bootleggers during prohibition.

Newell Avery
(1817-1877)

One of the founders of the Republican Party in 1854. He was, along with Simon Murphy, one of the most prominent lumbermen in the country.

Cummings Davis Whitcomb
(1840-1909)

An 'old time railroad man." He was the father of E. B. Whitcomb, the president of the Scripps Corporation and husband of Anna Scripps Whitcomb.



Tillie Stewart
(1877-1896)

Died visiting her brothers grave.

ON HER BROTHER'S GRAVE.

TILLIE STEWART'S CORPSE FOUND IN WOODMERE CEMETERY.

George Smith, a clerk in the office of the Woodmere Cemetery Association, yesterday morning found the corpse of Tillie Stewart in the graveyard, the body in a kneeling position and the face resting on a headstone. The stone that served as her pillow was at the end of the grave of Howard McDonald, who had lived at 376 Mt. Elliott avenue, and was 13 years old at the time of death, last August. He was the son of Adam and Hannah McDonald, and was Tillie's own half-brother. She was about 21 years old. From the appearance of the body it had been in that position about eighteen hours. The face was purple and blood had flowed from the mouth. A gray woolen shawl enveloped the head.

Dr. Theodore Schmalzriedt was summoned, and after a short examination expressed the opinion that it was a case neither of suicide nor of murder; a rupture of a blood vessel was assigned as the cause of death. The remains were taken to the undertaking shop of his brother at Michigan avenue and Twenty-ninth street.

For two months past the girl had been living with Mrs. Ida O'Neill, on B street, between Hastings and Rivard streets. Though both Mrs. O'Neill and Mrs. McDonald have to work to help out an existence Tillie refused to assist when asked to do so, and finally when informed by Mrs. O'Neill that she must do something or leave the house, she took it to heart and in a despondent frame of mind left the house Monday noon, without a word as to her destination or plans.

Her relatives and friends say the girl was not given to despondency, and the presence in her pocket of a ticket to a ball to be given by the Grosse Pointe Dramatic club November 25, in Albrecht's hall, on Chene street, indicated that she was fond of social pleasures.

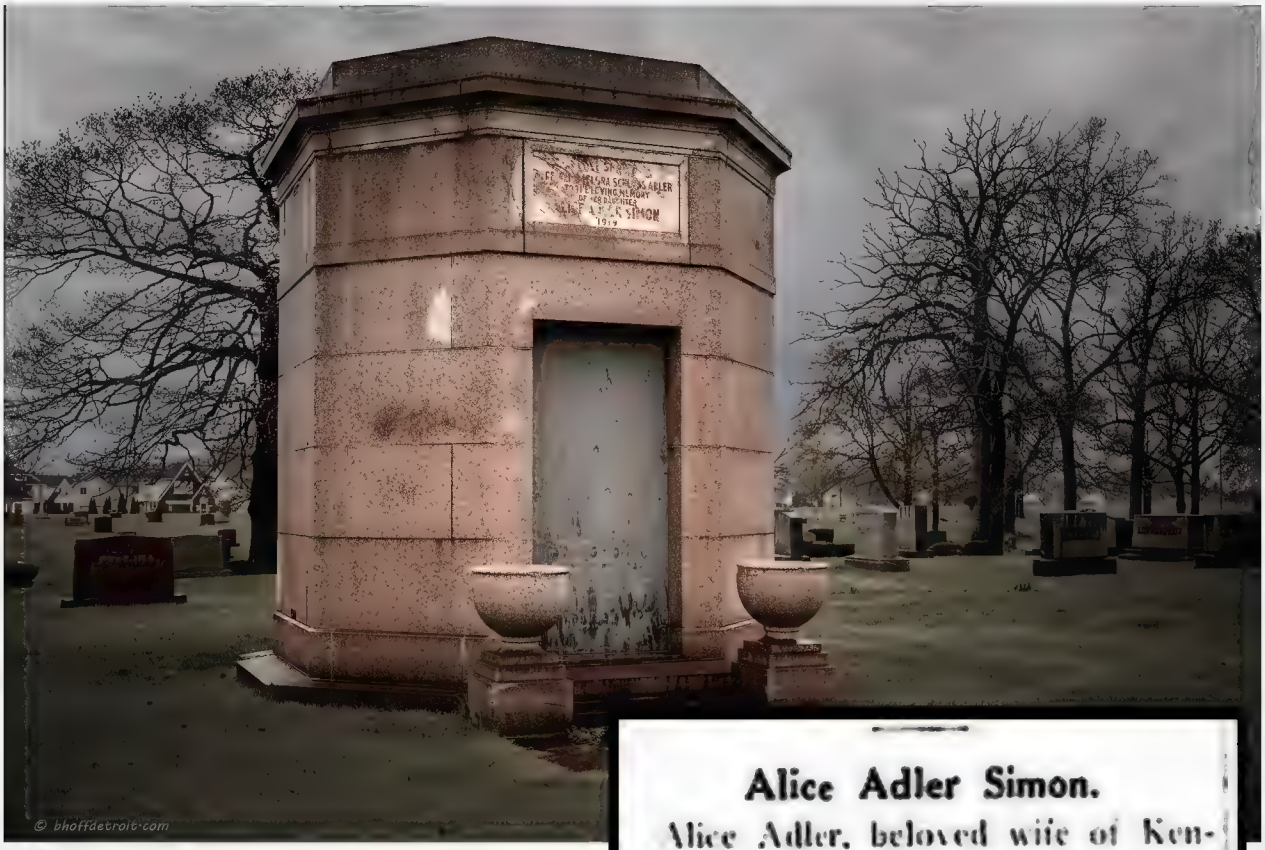
The Beth El Section.

Temple Beth El purchased the exclusive burial rights for section North F in 1873. Another section, Bethel, was purchased in 1913.

Rabbi Leo Franklin

(1870-1948)

Rabbi of Temple Beth El from 1899 to 1941. He was the most famous Rabbi in the nation at the time. A neighbor of Henry Ford in the Boston-Edison neighborhood of Detroit, they become friends. Ford provided a new car to Rabbi Franklin, until Ford's publication of the antisemitic "The International Jew" when Franklin returned the gift.



Albert Adler (1857-1916)
Flora Schloss Josephs
(1864-1927)
Alice Adler Simon (1892-1918).

"LOVE SHRINE
ERECTED BY FLORA
SCHLOSS ADLER
TO THE LOVING MEMORY
OF HER DAUGHTER
ALICE ADLER SIMON
1919"

Alice Adler Simon.

Alice Adler, beloved wife of Kenneth Simon and only daughter of Mrs. Flora S. Adler, died in her home in New York City on Thursday evening, Oct. 17th, and was buried in Detroit on Monday last.

Mrs. Simon was a Detroit girl and had many friends here. Since her marriage about three years ago, she has lived in New York where she took a very active part in various forms of War Relief work. She was especially interested in the care of crippled children. Her death is sincerely mourned by a very large circle of friends.

Rabbi Franklin officiated at the chapel from which the funeral was held and Rabbi Mayerberg conducted the services at the cemetery.

Albert owned a hat business. His wife commissioned the "love shrine" for her daughter. At the time of her death, Flora, left $20,000 for the maintenance of the shrine, including weekly cleaning of the door handle.

Sigmund Rothschild
(1837-1907)

Born in Germany, he came to the United States in 1851. He opened a cigar stand at the Hotel Pontchartrain in Detroit, which was a quick success. In 1854, he formed Rothschild and Brother Co, becoming a leading tobacconist and one of the largest tobacco buyers in the world.

Rothschild & Bro. (Sigmund and Feist), dealers in leaf and importers of Havana tobacco and fancy goods, 77 and 79 Jefferson ave.
Rothwell James, h 840 Woodbridge w.

E. J. Cohen
(1853-1914)

A trustee at Temple Beth El and owner of a carpet business.

David Brown (1875-1958) **Paula Kahn Brown** (1878-1924)
David Brown founded the General Necessities Corporation in 1898, distributing coal and ice. In 1914, he founded the Old Newsboys Goodfellow Fund with Jim L. Brady. He married Paula Kahn, Albert Kahn's sister. A prominent banker, he was widely known for his worldwide philanthropy.
Mausoleum designed by Albert Kahn.

Lydia Mendelssohn
(1856-1901)

The first wife of "Detroit capitalist, philanthropist, and art patron, Lewis Mendelssohn, executive of the Fisher Body Corporation.

After her son, Gordon, donated $20,000 to the University of Michigan in 1929, he asked that the the theater be named the Lydia Mendelssohn Theater in her honor.

Samuel X. Gaylord
(1861-1939)

A leading downtown merchant, he operated one of the earliest department stores in the nation, before selling the Crowley, Milner and Company.

ESTABLISHMENT OF GAYLORD FOUNDATION OF $200,000 ANNOUNCED BY DR. FRANKLIN; LARGEST CONTRIBUTION EVER MADE TO JEWISH PHILANTHROPIES IN DETROIT

Prime Purpose of Gift Announced in Behalf of Samuel X. Gaylord Will be the Creation of an Adequate Educational and Recreational Center for the Jewish Youth of This City

BOARD OF TRUSTEES CONSISTS, IN ADDITION TO DONOR, OF DR. FRANKLIN, ADOLPH FINSTERWALD, MELVILLE WELT, FRED BUTZEL, JOSEPH GAYLORD

Document Conveying Gift States That "Donor Believes That Office of Wealth Should be to Bring the Means of Helpful Opportunity to Those Less Fortunately Placed."

Above: Henkel's Flour Plant. , now the site of the Windsor Tunnel

The Henkel Flour Mills
DIVISION OF INTERNATIONAL MILLING COMPANY
MAKERS OF HENKEL'S EXTRA FANCY FLOURS
"MADE GOOD" SINCE 1855
DETROIT, MICHIGAN

Peter Henkel
(824-1904)

Robert Henkel
(1860-1930)

Peter Henkel came to America in 1842 and started in the flour trade. He opened the Commercial Milling Company in 1855, later changing the name to Henkel Flour Mills. His son Robert took over the company.

Upper Corner: Peter Henkel

Right: Robert Henkel

Leopold Freud
(1848-1914)

Born in Hungary, he moved to Northern Michigan and started a lumber and mining business with his brother Julius. He moved to Detroit, gettng into real estate and became the "first subdivision man in Detroit".

James W. Ailes
(1858-1941)

Born in Ohio, he moved to Detroit in 1879, and entered the furniture business, becoming the President of C.D. Widman Company. Later, he worked with the Detroit Insurance Agency.

Dr. Oscar Lowman
(1860-1939)

A Harvard graduate, and co-founder of Lambert & Lowman, a drug company that operated a plant at 12th and Howard.

Ice Storm - February 2023

The Bosnian American Islamic Garden. On the West side of the cemetery, only blocks away from the oldest Mosque in Michigan, this area has been a Muslim burial site for decades. In the Bosnian section, the female gravestones have rounded tops, and the males are flat, both marked with a common saying "You will always be in our hearts. Your loved ones".

Ransom Gillis
(1838-1901)

Detroit Businessman, dealing in wholesale dry goods, and director of Citizens Saving Bank. His name is most widely known now for the Ranson Gillis House in Detroit, that was famously restored by Nicole Curtis on the tv show, Rehab Addict.

EDSON, MOORE & CO.,
WHOLESALE DEALERS IN
DRY GOODS,
190 and 192 Jefferson Avenue,
{Jas. L. Edson, Geo. F. Moore, Ransom Gillis, Charles Buncher, Stephen Baldwin, Special.}
DETROIT, MICH.

Above: The Gillis House in 1879, 1998, and 2020

JAMES WALKER
BORN IN DUNFERMLINE SCOTLAND MAY 14th 1828.
PASSED INTO THE IMMORTAL LIFE
IN DETROIT MICHIGAN APRIL 30th 1913
MARGARET SHARP
BELOVED WIFE OF JAMES WALKER
BORN IN DUNBLANE SCOTLAND JULY 15th 1833.
PASSED INTO THE IMMORTAL LIFE
IN DETROIT MICHIGAN OCTOBER 23rd 1904.
WALKER

James Walker
(1828-1913)
Moved to Detroit in 1856, founding the plumbing supply firm, James Walker and Son in 1867. He sold the company to Sales and Broad in 1906.

Right: "Pardee Genealogy" by Donald Lines Jacobus

208. JOHN WILLIAMS[6] PARDEE (*Joseph,[5] John,[4] Joseph,[3] Joseph,[2] George[1]*), born at Dearborn, Mich., 22 June 1829, died there 19 Oct. 1872; married, 24 May 1865, HARRIET A. PATRICK, born 31 Oct. 1843, died 13 Sept. 1906, daughter of Joseph and Abigail (Howard) Patrick. She married second, Alvin Seaman, of Detroit, Mich.

His father, after making provision for the other children, willed the homestead to him and to his brother Andrew Jackson. After the death of his brother unmarried, he continued to live on the old homestead until his death, and added to the farm until it contained 600 acres.

Children, born at Dearborn, Mich.:

i. JOSEPH HENRY,[7] b. 31 Mar. 1866; d. 15 Apr. 1870.
ii. MARY L., b. 13 Apr. 1868.
392. iii. JACKSON HOWARD, b. 28 Jan. 1870.
iv. L. BELLE, b. 18 Feb. 1872.

John Pardee
(1829-1872)
A familiar name in Dearborn, his family were early settlers in Detroit. He moved ten miles away from Detroit (at the time), buying 600 acres and establishing the largest farm in Dearborn.

Claudius Horatio Candler
(1845-1910)
President of Calvert Lithographing Company, charter member of Grace Episcopal Church founded in 1867, and the VP of the Detroit Casket Company.

C. H. CANDLER IS DEAD; ILL WEEK

Head of Calvert Lithographing Company, Detroit Resident Fully Half Century.

LEADER IN CHURCH AND IN MASONIC AFFAIRS

Interested in Many Business Concerns; Acute Pneumonia the Cause of Death.

D

John J. Bagley (1832-1881)

The 16th Governor of Michigan, serving from 1872-1877, responsible for large improvements to the education system. He was a member of the Board of Education and Common Council. He had business interests in tobacco, banking, and insurance. He gave $5,000 in his will for the construction of a drinking fountain for the people of Detroit.

The fountain was dedicated in 1887 and now stands at Cadillac Square.

Left: Bagley Tobacco Company, 1910

Right: Bagley Memorial Fountain

Michael J. Vreeland
(1838-1876)

Brevet General of The 4th Michigan Infantry in the Civil War. Fought and wounded at Gettysburg--shot in the back and going through his lung. He never fully recovered.

Newell Avery
(1817-1877)

One of the founders of the Republican Party in 1854. He was, along with Simon Murphy, one of the most prominent lumbermen in the country.

James Heald, Manager, Newell Avery, S. J. Murphy, } Detroit, E. E. Chaffee, Chicago.

HEALD, AVERY & CO.,

(Successors to WELCH, HEALD & CO.,)

MANUFACTURERS OF

LUMBER & LATH,

MONTAGUE, MICHIGAN.

Conrad Ten Eyck
(1782-1847)

Prominent fur trader and merchant, running TenEyck Tavern. One of the founders of Dearborn Township, he served as Township Supervisor, County Sheriff, and Michigan State Senator. He helped draft Michigan's first constitution in 1835.

David Mark Richardson

(1826-1889)

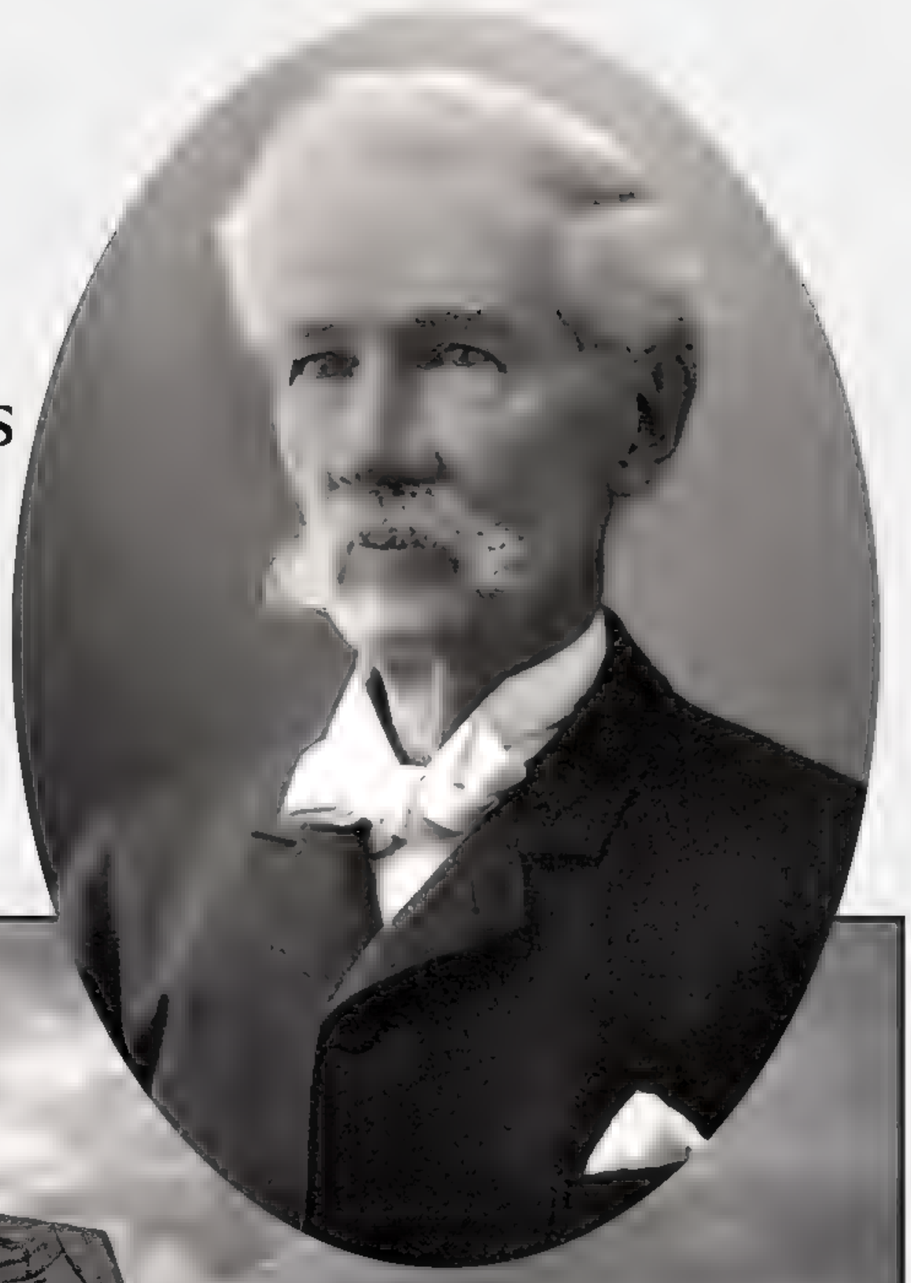
Founder of Richardson Match Company

MATCHES,

No. 371 WOODBRIDGE ST. WEST,

DETROIT, { J. W. Hibbard, D. M. Richardson, M. B. Dodge. } MICHIGAN.

Seymour Finney
(1813-1899)

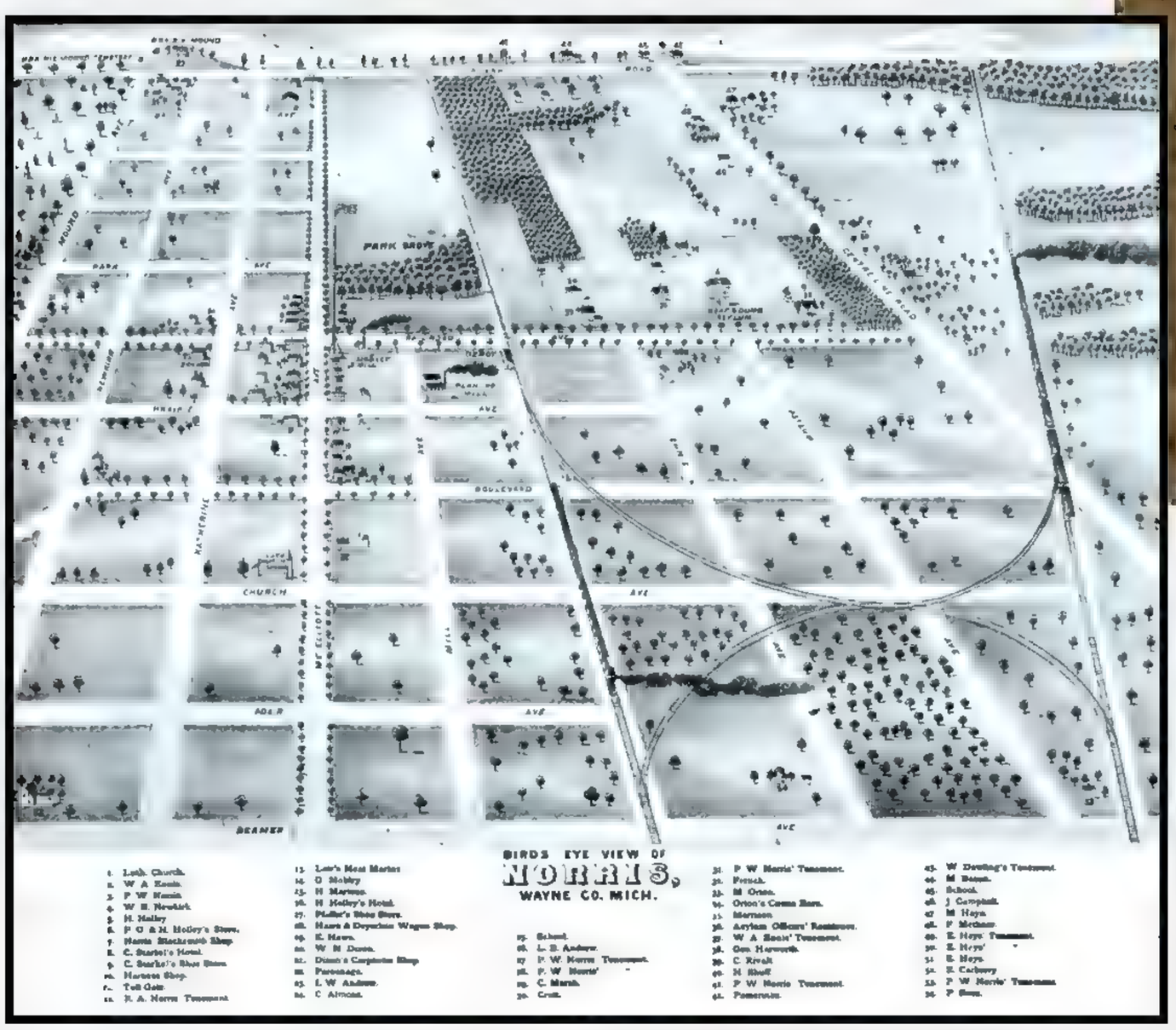


Established the Finney House, a boarding house, at Woodward and Griswold. He was one of the most active men in the Underground Railroad, using a barn on his property as the last stop before crossing over to Canada.

Left: The old Finney Barn northeast corner of Griswold and State Street. Now the Site Savings Bank (1212 Griswold Street). The Barn was a 'stop' on the Underground Railroad.

Philetus W. Norris
(1821-1885)

The second Superintendent of Yellowstone National Park from 1877-1882. He was instrumental in securing the land and funds for its establishment as a national park. Norris Geyser Basin, Mount Norris, and Norris Pass in Yellowstone all bare his name. He founded and platted the Village of Norris (around present-day Mr. Elliot and Nevada). It was annexed by Detroit in 1916. The Two Way Inn (built 1876) originally served as Norris' jail and general store.



Above: Map of Norris, 1876

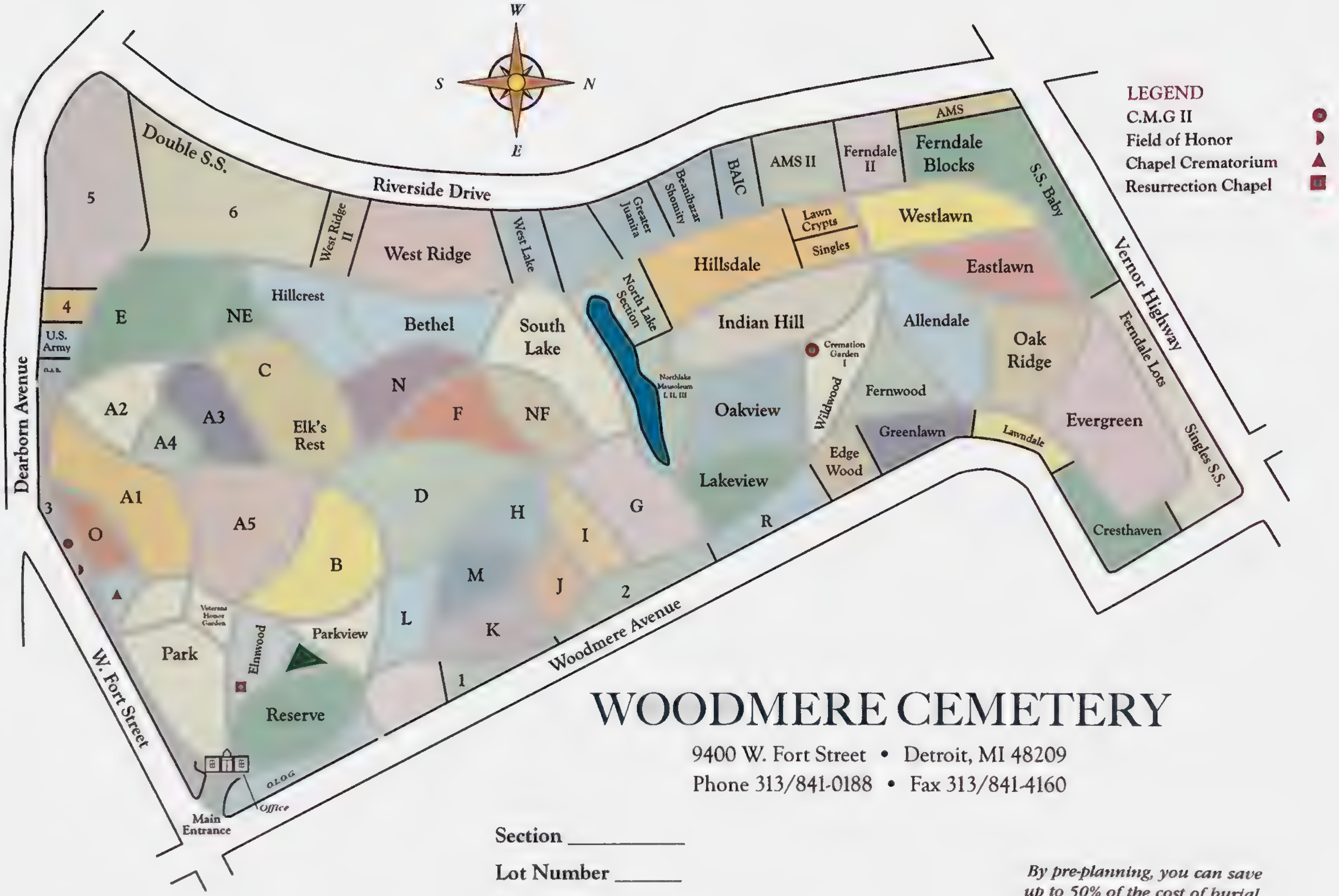
The Two Way Inn, 2020

Crosier Davison

(1822-1889)

He moved to Alcona County, Michigan in 1848, opening a fishery and establishing himself in the booming lumber trade. After making a fortune, he retired and moved to Detroit in 1880.

Captain William H. Mott
(1819-1899) Corps of Engineers, the Superintendent of the St. Clair Ship Canal. Died in a streetcar accident at Woodward and Larned.



WOODMERE CEMETERY

9400 W. Fort Street • Detroit, MI 48209
Phone 313/841-0188 • Fax 313/841-4160

Section _____

Lot Number _____

Space _____

Name of Deceased _____

By pre-planning, you can save up to 50% of the cost of burial. Call for a free consultation with a pre-need counselor. 313/841-0188

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York, Joe	Ferndale

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Equipped with a Nikon camera, photographer Bhoff combs through Detroit neighborhoods capturing city landmarks, the homes of famous Detroiters past and present and abandoned buildings.

Each photo tells a unique story.

His photography shows the beauty – and sometimes tragedy – of Detroit's past, highlighting notable homes and resting places of legendary Detroiters but also documenting buildings that were once thriving schools, churches or community staples.
-Cara Ball, DETROIT (WXYZ)

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Youtube: @BhoffDetroit
Bluesky: @bhoff313.bsky.social

WOODMERE

A Detroit Story

By Bhoff Detroit

About the Author

Bhoff Detroit is a photographer, writer, and lifelong Detroiter with a passion for preserving the city's stories through imagery and history. Raised in Southwest Detroit and educated at Wayne State University, where he studied history, Bhoff brings a deep local knowledge and personal connection to every photo he takes.

His work focuses on Detroit's hidden landmarks, forgotten neighborhoods, and iconic cultural sites — capturing the beauty, struggle, and soul of the city with honesty and heart. Through social media, his photography has reached thousands who share his love for Detroit's past and hope for its future.

This book is a visual journey through the city's layered history, told one image and story at a time.